

# *Horizon*

ROY HARROD

THE SURRENDER OF FREE CHOICE

IGNAZIO SILONE

ON THE PLACE OF THE INTELLECT AND THE  
PRETENSIONS OF THE INTELLECTUAL

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

DOING GOOD

JOHN RUSSELL

THE OLD AGE OF ANDRÉ GIDE

IAN FLEMING

WHERE SHALL JOHN GO? XIII—JAMAICA

C. M. BOWRA

AN ITALIAN POET: SALVATORE QUASIMODO

BOOKS OF 1947—A QUESTIONNAIRE

POEM BY DYLAN THOMAS

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*Edited by Cyril Connolly*

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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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## COMMENT

THE award of the Nobel prize to André Gide just after his seventy-eighth birthday is one of the few strokes of felicity in this miserable year. Gide represents that spirit of creative doubt which, with its antithesis, the spirit of reflective action is a twin hallmark of Western civilization. On the whole the creative doubters (Gide, Valéry, Joyce, Proust) represent an older generation than the reflective doers (Malraux, Montherlant, Camus, T. E. Lawrence) and certainly a wiser one. It is pleasant that a knowledge of Gide (still referred to by the *Daily Mail* as 'the esoteric writer') should at last be spreading in England, which he visited this summer. The publication of his *Journal* by Secker & Warburg has just made available his greatest book and the translation of *Thesée* by John Russell for HORIZON next year will give access to his most delightful.

Otherwise it has been a year of disappointment. One long poem by Miss Sitwell, one original experiment in the form of the novel by a young writer and the catalogue of that branch of our literature which can be described as 'experimental' is complete. In France Surrealism and even Dada continue to exert an influence, the poems of the 'Lettristes' are similar to those of Jolas and Rutra in early numbers of *transition*; Jabberwocky is in fashion. Here one can say that such a thing as *avant-garde* in literature has ceased to exist. And a literature without an *avant-garde* soon becomes a literature without a main body. It is but one more sign of what a distinguished critic has called 'The Twilight of the Arts'.

There is an intimate connection between the Twilight of the Arts and the twilight of a civilization. There was a certain twilight of the arts at the end of the eighteenth century (there was hardly any great poetry in England between Gray and Wordsworth), but it was to be dispelled by the wonderful moonshine of romanticism; it remains to be seen whether we are on the verge of a new Dark Age, lasting for several hundred years, or if our greatest writers are just around the corner. If the break-up of Europe corresponds to the break-up of the Roman Empire, with Communism replacing primitive Christianity, then the arts are in peril, for Communism does not produce great art, it uses art as a means and censors it, and its scientific optimism excludes

the sense of tragedy and mystery which forms an ingredient. The prerequisites of an artistic revival are freedom to travel and enough to eat; it is just possible the Marshall Plan may secure these for Western Europe. There remains an even more essential condition—that Western Europe believes in itself. At present Russia and the United States are the only two countries with such a faith, which are convinced that they are about to fulfil an historical mission, even though it be only to destroy each other. Western Europe has lost that belief and cannot regain it until it is reintegrated with Eastern Europe and federated into the most civilized of the four or five units which comprise a world state. Meanwhile, the effect of the increasing barriers between European countries is to bring the arts to a state of national and provincial bankruptcy. The spiritual problem of the artist in a world without hope is deeper than the economic, for most artists are secretly aware that if they could believe passionately in their mission their economic difficulties would either be solved or would cease to matter. At present most of us labour under a double disappointment, a disappointment with the state of the world which two years after the war seems fast sinking into the frame of mind which immediately preceded it, and a disappointment with our experience of Socialism, which some of us associated with the idea of joy. But a Government which conscripts labour, cuts paper, prohibits book imports, and does not even dare to propose the abolition of the death penalty (though the proposal was first incorporated in a Conservative Home-Secretary's Bill) bears no relation to the kind of Socialism which many of us envisaged. Except in matters of colonial and foreign policy, and in certain elementary measures of social justice, the world situation (often another name for the intransigence of the Kremlin) has not permitted Socialism in this country to express its ideals, and the public may soon be taking the wretched material of its austerity suit to a tailor who promises a more dashing line.



HORIZON welcomes the views of its readers on its new cover, which has been designed to make the contents more legible. The February number will consist of a complete short novel, *The Loved One, an Anglo-American Tragedy*, by Evelyn Waugh.

## 'Horizon's' Christmas Message

**Rev. Dr. Optimian:** Science is one thing and wisdom is another. Science is an edged tool with which men play like children and cut their own fingers. If you look at the results which science has brought in its train, you will find them to consist almost wholly in elements of mischief. See how much belongs to the word Explosion alone, of which the ancients knew nothing. Explosions of powder-mills and powder-magazines; of coal-gas in mines and in houses; of high-pressure engines in ships and boats and factories. See the complications and refinements of modes of destruction in revolvers and rifles and shells and rockets and cannon. See collisions and wrecks and every mode of disaster by land and by sea, resulting chiefly from the insanity for speed, in those who for the most part have nothing to do at the end of the race, which they run as if they were so many Mercuries speeding with messages from Jupiter. Look at our scientific drainage, which turns refuse into poison. Look at the subsoil of London, whenever it is turned up to the air, converted by gas leakage into one mass of pestilent blackness, in which no vegetation can flourish, and above which, with the rapid growth of the ever-growing nuisance, no living thing will breathe with impunity. Look at our scientific machinery, which has destroyed domestic manufacture, which has substituted rottenness for strength in the thing made, and physical degradation in crowded towns for healthy and comfortable country life in the makers. The day would fail if I should attempt to enumerate the evils which science has inflicted on mankind. *I almost think it is the ultimate destiny of science to exterminate the human race.*

**Lord Curryfin:** You have gone over a wide field, which we might exhaust a good bin of claret in fully discussing.      T. L. Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, 1866

DYLAN THOMAS  
IN COUNTRY SLEEP

I

NEVER and never, my girl riding far and near  
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,  
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood  
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,

My dear, my dear,  
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year  
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,  
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire  
Of the hobnail tales: No goosherd or swine will turn  
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire

And prince of ice  
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise  
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn,

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed  
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.  
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern  
And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.

Lie fast and soothed,  
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood.  
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell  
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and near,  
For who unmanningly haunts the mountain caverned caves  
Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear

From the starred well:  
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell  
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and dames of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.  
 Sanctum sanctorum the animal eye of the wood  
 In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost  
 The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood.

Now the tales praise

The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze  
 On the lords'-table of the bowing grass. Fear mask

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood  
 Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind  
 And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the Jew.  
 The country is holy: O bide in that country kind,

Know the green good,

Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood  
 Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in the lowly house  
 In the squirrel nimble grove, under linen and thatch  
 And star: held and blessed, though you scour the high four  
 Winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch,

Cool in your vows.

Yet out of the beaked, web dark and the pouncing boughs  
 Be sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure

And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn,  
 This night and each vast night until the stern bell talks  
 In the tower and tolls the sleep over the stalls  
 Of the hearthstone tales my own, last love; and the soul walks

The waters shorn.

This night and each night since the falling star you were born,  
 Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the snow, as the vale mist rides  
 Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind—  
 Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands  
 Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged

Appleseed glides,

And falls, and flowers in the yawning wounds at our sides,  
 As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence.

## II

Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks  
 And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!

The leaping saga of prayer! And high, there, on the hares-  
 Heeled winds the rooks

Cawing from their black bethels soaring, the holy books  
 Of birds! Among the cocks like fire the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of birds in the grape green wrist  
 Of the wood! pastoral beat of blood through the laced leaves!  
 The stream from the priest black wristed spinney and sleeves

Of thistling frost

Of the nightingale's din and tale! the upgiven ghost  
 Of the dingle torn to singing and the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale in the skimmed  
 Yard of the buttermilk rain on the pail! The sermon  
 Of blood! The bird loud vein! The saga from mermen

To seraphim

Leaping! The gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him  
 Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind.

Illumination of music! the lulled black backed  
 Gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! and the foal moves  
 Through the shaken greensward lake, silent, on moonshod hooves,  
 In the winds' wakes.

Music of elements, that a miracle makes!

Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act,

The haygold haired; my love asleep, and the rift blue  
 Eyed, in the haloed house, in her rareness and hilly  
 High riding, held and blessed and true, and so stilly  
 Lying the sky

Might cross its planets, the bell weep, night gather her eyes,  
 The Thief fall on the dead like the willynilly dew,

Only for the turning of the earth in her holy  
 Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go  
 Round the sun, he comes to my love like the designed snow,  
 And truly he

Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea,  
 And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. Oh he

Comes designed to my love to steal not her tide raking  
Wound, nor her riding high, nor her eyes, nor kindled hair,  
But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer

He comes to take

Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake  
He comes to leave her in the loosed, dumb sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.  
Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear  
My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear  
Since you were born:  
And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn reach first  
dawn,  
Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun.

### ***Our American Begging Bowl***

The response to our American Begging Bowl (in spite of opposition from journalists and military men, whose moral indignation savours of the Fifth Form at St. Dominic's) has been most favourable. We should like to repeat that we are willing to distribute food parcels to any authentic writer or painter. The distribution should not be left to the discretion of the Editor, as it robs the gift of personal value. Please address them only to contributors or non-contributors whose work has afforded the sender pleasure.

*ROY HARROD*

## THE SURRENDER OF FREE CHOICE

THE transition from war to peace drags on. Its inconveniences do not diminish, but get worse. There comes into the mind a horrid suspicion. We are told that these difficulties with which we struggle are due to the transition. But is it possible that this transition is becoming a myth? More than two years have passed since the end of the war. Difficulties increase. Is it quite certain that they have anything to do with a transition?

Things had to be done in a certain way during the war. We did not like those ways of wartime, but endured them patiently. The least stoical of us could always find resources to endure by thinking of Adolph Hitler. And then, when VE and VJ came, there remained many inconveniences, many things done in ways which we did not like. Those, too, had to be endured, because they were part of the transition. Who would be such a fool as to suppose that everything could be restored to normal in a few weeks? Now there was some encouragement to be patient for a little longer, because a finite term was presumably set to our endurance. The transition would eventually be effected.

But the situation seems to have hardened, the rations, the directions, the prohibitions. Most men and women have been released from the Forces, and a comparatively small number is now engaged upon making munitions. Why is not the transition over? Why is life not becoming easy?

Is it possible that these new ways of doing things, which we do not like, have become permanent features of our society? Matters had to be managed in ways which we did not like during the war, because it was war. But one must suppose that it is possible always to manage things in a warlike sort of way. One may have warlike economy even if there is no war.

Has someone decided that this warlike management is a good way of managing our affairs? Or, perhaps, it is not so simple as that. Are there forces at work tending to keep in being this warlike management? Has something happened which impedes

the revival of the more vigorous and free interplay of peacetime society? It is very necessary for those who dislike the wartime methods of management, or some parts of them, to be extremely vigilant. The study of history leads us to suppose that great changes in ways of human life take place not through the definite plan of a particular person but by the operation of forces over which no one has control. They happen over night. Thereafter people find themselves doing things differently, not through their free act or choice but because the complex system of social arrangements has developed thus.

In the peculiar circumstances of Britain, prosperous and dominant, most social changes during the last century have—despite the surprises that science continually produces for us—come to some extent deliberately and in consequence of a movement of thought. The Trade Unions have pursued a coherent policy for improving the conditions of labour. Parliament, after agitation as well as thought, passed legislation for social amelioration. J. S. Mill, Mrs. Butler, Miss Clough and others had deep thoughts which have led to the emancipation of women. The democratic character of our society shows its best manifestation not in the chopping and changing of Parties by votes at General Elections, but by enabling thoughts germinating in the minds of great people to be carried into effect, if and when they are pleasing to the people as a whole, so that the shape of our society has to some extent been modelled and changed in ways that are the outcome of our thoughts and aspirations.

Is there now some weakening in the democracy? Who were the great men or women in whose minds the idea of a rationed and directed society germinated? Or are we allowing things to happen, which greatly change the pattern of our lives, that do not spring from thought and aspiration at all?

It is most important, therefore, that thinking people should examine carefully the manifestations of this transition phase, lest after all it prove not to be a transition phase at all, but the early years of a new type of society. If this new pattern is being imposed upon us, not necessarily by wicked conspirators, but as the resultant of a number of forces which we do not understand and therefore have not mastered, then by thought and criticism and by acceptance or rejection we may reassert our will and, if we so will, prevent the pattern becoming permanent.

Before proceeding may I brush aside certain ideas which may occur to the reader, such as that this pattern is indeed the inevitable result of transition from war and is due to such causes as the unsettled state of Europe? Why should not Britain put her own house in order? The United States have done so to a very large extent. It is true that we depend upon foreign trade but, for the moment anyhow, there are plenty of markets for British goods, and we should not be held back from restoring the old pattern of life for that reason. Certain foods are in short world supply in relation to millions of hungry mouths, and in respect of them we might voluntarily put ourselves upon a ration. Such self-denial, taking the form of a voluntary gesture by a free people, to relieve suffering elsewhere, would be altogether different from the vast network of restrictions and limitations under which we now live.

What are the salient features of this new pattern? One appears to be a greater equality of income. This in itself will be welcome to many. This development is more like those other developments that I have mentioned, in being the fruit of past thought and aspiration. Many good men and women have wished for this, and by ways, devious, but not altogether unconnected with those wishes, it has come. Some may fear an excessive levelling out. But I seem to remember that Mr. George Bernard Shaw, the greatest champion of equality of all, has recently issued a note of warning. Artists and thinkers, he argues, must have certain amenities if they are to thrive and do their job properly. These amenities exceed what could be obtained at the moment by an exact partition among all citizens of the present national income. The thinkers and intellectual workers of the community are to be shored up above the level which would result from exact partition. The attainment of Shavian equality is to proceed by the main mass of the community being gradually raised, until we can enjoy the Utopian state in which they all have as much as Mr. Shaw deems necessary now for the thinkers.

Things are not in the least likely to develop in this way, but the concession by Mr. Bernard Shaw on the one hand and on the other the feeling which many descendants of the Victorian rich have, that the old order was wrong, will probably suffice to secure a compromise, not altogether unacceptable to the great majority, between exact equality on the one hand and the excessive inequalities of the Victorian age. It is not there that danger lies.

The other main feature of this new pattern is the all-pervading system of control. In material matters we have reached a condition of complete servitude, and by infection, or some further development of this unwilling process, we may be led to mental servitude also.

It may be well to consider one special aspect of the general system of control. The most striking change in the life of the ordinary person is that he is no longer able to do what he likes with the money he has. This is clearly something quite distinct from the more equal distribution of income. That is achieved in part by heavy taxation, in part by wage adjustments and in part by social legislation. But, after the taxes are paid, a man can no longer do what he will with the residue of his money. In the old days money was a means of commanding any commodity that the wit of man could produce. It was thus a great guarantee of individual freedom. Among people of all classes there are vast diversities of taste. In the old days many individuals felt that they had not enough money, but they had the satisfaction of knowing that with what they had they could do what they wished. They could husband it and accumulate it with a view to buying what was nearest their heart's desire. By economy in one line they could be extravagant in another. They could concentrate on things of the mind or of the body. They could lavish their resources upon things of the home or upon travel.

Now everything is different. These decisions, instead of being made by the individual himself, are made by someone else. There is so much meat, and so much butter, and so much petrol, or none, and no travel abroad. Other things, not necessarily of any great importance, can be obtained in the shops. All this is decided somewhere at the centre of the 'planned' economy. Will it go on being decided there? This is a most important point. Is this centralized decision of how much butter and how much petrol people are to have, to be a permanent feature of our new society? That is a point in regard to which we must beware of those who lull us with the word 'transition'. Are we always, for instance, to be told how much foreign travel? It may be none. It may be £75. But there have always been many British who have wished to put a large fraction of their income into foreign travel. Will they never regain their old liberty?

It cannot be argued that this system of central decision is any longer required by 'national necessity'. It is important to

understand the difference between peace and war in this regard. What enabled the individual to have that freedom which he took as a matter of course before 1939 was the operation of the price system, by which goods or amenities in short supply went up in price, so that those who most valued them could have them. In wartime this system could not be allowed, because the flow of money was so great that we should have had all prices soaring up together and the whole monetary system destroyed in an orgy of 'inflation'. But there is no reason why the flow of money should be excessive now, unless we deliberately make it so. There is no reason why the price system should not be restored, and thereby the individual's freedom, even should he cherish that diabolical desire to travel abroad.

There are two main lines of policy at present which tend to rivet chains upon the individual. The former involves a somewhat technical economic argument, which I ask the reader to bear with. The Government has taken upon itself the task of deciding arbitrarily, without reference to the wishes of the people, how much must be done to improve the fixed equipment of the country. Although certain installations, such as our system of roads, have long been undertaken by arbitrary Government decision, in the main it is true to say that this plan of having the Government decide on the volume of total installation is new. Previously this total volume was the result of individual decision. There were indeed two sets of decisions, namely the decisions of business people who decided to build a factory, a railway line, houses, etc., and the decisions of those who by deciding not to spend the whole of their income made funds available for the aforesaid purposes. Recently, economists have shown that these two sets of decisions do not always dovetail completely and that there might be too much or too little installation having regard to what people were in total saving. In the works of Keynes and other pre-war economists, who advocated reform, it was generally assumed that a more perfect dovetailing was desirable. In consequence of such reforms a fully employed nation would decide—that is each individual would decide, and the national decision would be the aggregate of individual decisions—how much it wished to set aside from its income by way of saving, and that amount of saving would be made available to increase the installations of the country.

The present Government is clearly operating quite differently. It has suspended the old market mechanism by which installations were, albeit imperfectly, related to saving. It has authorized, whether by direct control and order or by encouragement and influence, an amount of installation that greatly exceeds the total of savings, and has thus perpetuated the wartime condition in which the flow of money greatly exceeds the flow of goods. It has thus abrogated one kind of freedom by virtue of which we enjoyed our other freedoms. It has abrogated the freedom of the community to decide how quickly it wishes to add to the capital installations of the country. It has authorized an excessive amount of installation. It has produced a tendency to inflationary pressure. It has made it impossible to reintroduce the free movement of prices. It has made it necessary to keep us clamped down under a system of universal control. It has thus abrogated the freedom of citizens to do what they like with their money. Since prices cannot be allowed to equate supply and demand—if they were we should get inflation—it has to equate supply and demand itself by deciding how much of each thing each person shall have. It is not doing this very efficiently, because the control is not quite universal, and, by reason of a small degree of resilience still left in a freedom-loving nation, it may be unwilling to round off its totalitarian economics. But it may find itself driven to do this. Now that the foreign credits are no longer available, the pressure caused by the excessive Government programmes will get more intense and goodness knows what may happen this winter.

Should the people allow the Government to continue to deprive them of these freedoms?

It may be argued that the country will in the end benefit from the installations that are in progress. There may be something in this, although in many cases the volume of work may be unduly enlarged by a doctrinaire attitude. But many years may elapse before the various programmes are completed. Satellite towns have to be built, railways electrified and so on. Are we content through all this period to forgo the free use of our money, to have our food rationed (however abundant the world supplies may be) and our quota of foreign travel set at some low figure or nothing? These great capital programmes have nothing whatever to do with the war; they have nothing to do with the transition period; they are exercises by the central authorities of arbitrary decision,

of free will, if you like—a free will that deprives each individual of his free will.

One day, perhaps, the programmes will be complete, the inflationary pressure at an end and the individual restored to his liberty. But will he be, after so long an interval? Can liberties, once lost, be so easily regained? After a lapse of a number of years some other projects may have come into the mind of the Government. Might it be preparation for a war which all patriotic citizens felt they must support? That is, of course, a possibility which cannot be neglected. But there may be other projects not now envisaged. Once the man at the centre with power, the Government in fact, has acquired the prerogative of authorizing the expenditure of hundreds of millions of pounds without leave or sanction of any kind, there is danger that he will allow his fancy a further freedom of play. Such things have happened when nations have fallen under despotisms.

The other line of policy which is responsible for our trammels is the complete abandonment of the principle, which was entrenched here so strongly and for so long, of Free Trade. We have not only discarded that doctrine completely, but we have even gone further back in mental retrogression beyond the comparatively liberal doctrines that governed our commercial policy in the eighteenth century. Free Trade was based on the notion that the individual, seeking to satisfy his needs, was doing no worse by his country if he bought what he wanted abroad than if he bought it at home. Indeed, if he could get it abroad more cheaply, he would be doing better for his country, because the man-power employed in making the export required to pay for what he had bought abroad would be less than the man-power required to produce that same thing for him at home. This doctrine in its main outline has never been overthrown by good argument. But how far we are from it now with our 'dollar shortage', and all the rest of it! Why is it worse for the country for a man to go abroad and eat French food in a French café than to consume the product of British agriculture in Britain? The plain fact of the matter is that on the whole it is no worse, and that most of the campaign to economize in foreign currencies is based on fallacy. It is true, of course, that if a man does not take a holiday abroad and *also* does not spend the money, which he would have spent there, at all, in a time of pressure like the present, the nation benefits. In

order to make room for the great programmes of installation, which I have already mentioned, it is desirable that everyone should save as much money as possible. Given the programmes, saving is patriotic in the highest degree. But if the man who would have taken a foreign holiday spends an equivalent amount on such goods as are available in Britain, then there is no national gain.

It is possible, though not certain, that the drive for increased agricultural production is overdone. The question is simply how can we get a certain quantity of food with the least exertion of man-power in existing circumstances. If we transfer 100,000 men from agriculture to the textile industries, is it quite certain that the food which they would have produced is more than the food that could be bought by exporting the textiles? The matter is slightly complicated at the moment by the world shortage of food. But so long as the authorities are as soaked in protectionist fallacy, as they appear to be at the moment, we cannot have confidence in our long-term agricultural policy.

It is important that persons of intellectuality should seek to revive Free Trade doctrines. Not only are they good economics, but also they tend to that interchange of product, of idea and of travel, which is so important for civilization.

The system of allocating goods, instead of allowing individual freedom of choice, is necessitated by the excessive installation programmes. But it is made more complicated and restrictive by protectionist fallacy. Foreign goods are severely frowned upon; dollar goods most of all. For good or evil we are not to know (owing to the ban of book imports) the thoughts that are taking shape in the minds of our cousins across the Atlantic. The protectionist policy achieves its most aggravated form in the policy of bilateralism which was discarded in Britain at the end of the seventeenth century, by which we have to take special measures to make our foreign trade balance, not only generally, but with each particular country. It is difficult for Britain to abandon its bilateralist tendency alone, unless other countries also do so. The Americans some years ago took the initiative in seeking to persuade other countries to abandon bilateralism, and continue to exert pressure in that direction, but we have failed to give it adequate support.

According to Free Trade doctrine, if foreign trade is not in

balance, that must be because the individuals in the nation are trying to live beyond their means. The cure would be retrenchment, not specifically in the purchase of foreign goods, but in the purchase of goods generally. In the particular case of Britain today, of course, it is in the great capital installation programmes that retrenchment should be made.

I hazarded an estimate earlier in the year that our programme of installations should be reduced by at least £500 million a year for the time being. The persistent and unforeseen deterioration in our balance of foreign trade in recent months together with the continued low level of output per man due in part to coal troubles, in part to intensified inflationary pressure and, conceivably, also to some sapping of the will to work, suggest that the target of £500 million per annum may not be enough to get things straight now.

Sir Stafford Cripps has put forward a programme for reducing by £200 million. This is a praiseworthy step in the right direction, but, by itself, it is woefully inadequate. It has been supplemented by new taxation to yield a budget surplus of £208 million in 1948-9. This supplement is insufficient, will take effect too late and will be partly offset by decrease in private savings due to some of the higher taxes. The budget surplus is a form of forced saving and only tends to fill the inflationary gap to the extent that it is not offset by a decline in voluntary savings. And of the taxes that restrict consumption, we may ask whether after all these miseries it is fair or necessary to do so.

It may be that this mixture of methods, a cut in the installation programmes combined with forced saving in the form of a budget surplus to finance the excess not cut off, may be the best way of proceeding in the immediate crisis. I am confident that even so the £200 million cut in the installation programmes will prove insufficient.

But vigilance is necessary. A budget surplus, particularly a large one, is a rather cruel method of procedure at a time when the ordinary expenditure of the Government, which has to be financed by taxes, is so greatly in excess of what our citizens have been accustomed to. Furthermore, the budget surplus has in the past been envisaged by reformers as a method of curbing inflationary tendencies resulting from over-expansion by private enterprise. But in this case the inflationary pressure is mainly due

to the capital programmes sponsored by the Government itself. It is in effect saying: 'we think all these installations are good for you and we intend to secure them by forced saving, whether you like it or not'.

That may be all right at this particular juncture. But, as in the case of all these special transition measures, we must be on the keen look-out to ensure this is not imposed upon us as a permanent regime. It is no light matter forcibly to deprive the citizen of his means of satisfying needs that he may consider urgent for the sake of the problematic benefits of installations.

A good example is the electrification and double-tracking of the Sheffield-Manchester line, which Sir Stafford is refusing at the moment to postpone. The argument now used is that this will facilitate the movement of coal—in four years time.

We hope that more coal will be produced in 1951, very largely for more exports. With the development of electrification and economies in coal utilization, it is by no means certain that more coal will have to be shifted internally in the years after 1951 than was shifted in the years before 1939. I am willing to believe that the Sheffield-Manchester scheme is one that ought ultimately to be carried out. It is quite another thing to assent to the view that its undisputed long-distance benefits are so substantial as to justify imposing forced saving on the people now—and it can be done in no other way.

Before the war there were two checks on extravagant installation. One was that the banking system served to limit the total roughly to the voluntary savings of the people. The other was that each company had to face the hard fact that its shareholders would lose money if it made a mistake. Now the decision rests on the *ipse dixit* of a back-room boy. I am reluctant to acquiesce patiently in further austerities in deference to that *ipse dixit* only.

The other line of policy required to rescue us from the doldrums is in the field of foreign trade. Here we have allowed a terrible muddle to develop which it is difficult to disentangle. It is of prime importance for Britain that she should receive good money for her exports, wherever they go. To make our exporters vary their efforts from time to time so as to concentrate upon the markets which happen at the moment to pay in 'hard' currency will ruin our trade.

From before the end of the war the Americans have been

extremely anxious to re-establish the system of multilateral trade, as it is called, whereby it is as advantageous to export to any one country as to any other, and goods may be bought where they are to be found cheap and to our taste. We ought from the beginning to have given the fullest possible support to that initiative. We have unaccountably failed to do so and our negotiators, instead of supporting the Americans in the effort to make the system as universal as possible, have pleaded only for escape clauses for Britain, which, as others must have them also, tend to make the task of re-creating the system impossible.

A complete change of heart is needed, amounting to a radical reversal of our external policy. If the Americans provide assistance under the Marshall plan, that would be a great opportunity. We should urge—and we should be heartily supported by the Americans—that a condition of assistance should be a general restoration of the convertibility of all currencies, including sterling, into the dollar. That would rescue us from this nightmare of bilateralism.

Restrictions on liberty flow inevitably from the present policies. A further consequence is inefficiency. Of this every individual has many examples in his private life. He may have the greatest difficulty in obtaining what is available. If his watch is broken, he may have to wander from shop to shop and wait many months. Many spend much time searching for such trivial things as matches or safety-pins. A journey may involve elaborate correspondence and waiting at offices. And queues remain with us. Thus the energies and time of individuals are absorbed to no purpose.

These same difficulties arise throughout the world of business. Owing to omnipresent shortages, there is a vast absorption of time in chasing orders and searching for the desired components. This means that the whole productive system is far less efficient than it should be, that the output available for consumers is correspondingly reduced and that shortages become even more acute.

Inefficiency is specifically caused by shortage. There is a more general reason why present policy is conducive to inefficiency. In some sense an attempt is being made to administer the economy as a whole. It is too big. In the course of many generations the units of production or trade have developed to a certain size. In some lines of output it is economic to have a very large unit, in others smaller units. There is an optimum size. There is an

analogy here with the animal world. It is well known that the largest animal is not necessarily the most efficient. There is a most convenient size, which, in the present phase of this planet, appears to have been achieved by the human being. So with business. Where, in consequence of evolution, the business unit has become very large, it may well be that nationalization would not necessarily entail a great loss in efficiency. (Coal, however, is not an example of this.) But it is one thing to nationalize an industry, which, on its own merits seems to require large-scale organization; it is quite another thing to try to run the economy as a whole as one unit, with Sir Stafford Cripps as commander-in-chief.

Over and above the question of the unmanageability of this great size, there is also that of incentive. It is a wonderful thing that men for so many generations have consented to toil from morning till dusk. What has prevented them from evading these painful tasks? If each and all took to scrounging, the whole nation would soon reach destitution. It may be dangerous to make too great a change in the system of incentives which has kept them active.

It would be too optimistic to suggest that all the inconveniences from which we now suffer could immediately be removed and that we could return to the conditions prevailing before the war. But things ought to be rapidly improving and the peculiar features of wartime—rations, restrictions, allocations, bilateral trade, etc.—ought to be on the wane. If they are not, that is not due to the war itself, but to a new type of policy which has recently come into being. It is necessary that all thinking men should assess the fruits of this policy very carefully and consider whether it stands justified.

When I was a young man I was a Liberal (and still am). This Party had three great assets which helped it in its quest for power. First, it had wide popular support since it was deemed to have the cause of the people at heart. Secondly, it canalized the impulses of goodwill in our society, of earnest desire to improve man's lot, and these have in total an important, though not necessarily a decisive, influence. Thirdly, it was the intelligent Party. These three virtues sufficed to combat the great forces to which it was opposed, those of *vis inertiae* and vested interest, and thus it often gained power.

How has the position changed? The mass of people, partly through education, have gained greatly in self-confidence. A larger number of them are more ready to stand up for their rights and vote for those supposed to be ready to help them against old-established forces. Thus the first asset of the three I mentioned is much more valuable than it used to be, and the Labour Party has on the whole taken possession of it. It also has in some degree the second asset, though not among the more highly educated people to the same extent that the Liberal Party once had it. But, alas, it has lost the third asset. It now stands out as the stupid Party. Leftist and stupid have become almost synonymous in politics. It is most sad that this should be so.

Where then find hope? Right and Left in their present connotation are not very old ideas in human history. There is a political conflict much older and more fundamental—the struggle for liberty. May not this become a rallying cry once more? Especially among thinking people? For political freedom is the life-blood of the arts, of humane culture, even, in the long run, of science. Some thinkers have, it is true, by concentrating their attention on one aspect of human affairs, magnified the supreme importance of the State. But thought does not confine itself to one aspect. It has a multiplicity of interests and values and has to champion now this, now that, manifestation of the spirit. Free thought and all its precious products will fade out if we are so organized that alleged 'national necessity' compels us to think and do the same thing and to frown upon the man who does not conform.

This is the testing time. In the war there was indeed a 'national necessity' for uniformity of practice. This is also true of the period which immediately followed. But now things are different. We should not be gulled into supposing that the results of the particular policy which the present Government has pursued constitute a 'national necessity'. The ban on foreign travel must not be looked upon as a passing requirement; it is symptomatic of the new order, which will remain unless we look at it critically and pass upon it the judgement that it is not to our taste.

IGNAZIO SILONE

# ON THE PLACE OF THE INTELLECT AND THE PRETENSIONS OF THE INTELLECTUAL

(A Speech made at the International PEN Club Conference  
at Basle, 1947)

THE speech I am going to make was not composed for delivery before a large audience; it consists rather of ideas that I should have preferred to have exchanged individually, with each one of you, or, to be more exact, with some of those whom I see among you; for it is common knowledge that conversation is much more in a writer's line than speech-making. It is this characteristic of writers that gives books their special quality, with which other techniques of communication cannot compete. This special quality will always remain their justification in the face of the cinema and the theatre; for the reading of a book, even in the most collectivized society, will always be a personal and solitary act, a quiet conversation between two men. That is one of the reasons why, when a writer makes a speech to a large assembly, his most sincere words have a note of confession.

Well, I have come before you, writers from all the countries of the world, simply to reaffirm in the great and brilliant republic of letters a certain humble presence that is also a survival. (I use the word 'humble' in its ancient sense of *prope humo*.) And it is my duty to explain clearly to you the significance of that presence in the contemporary situation.

What presence? I certainly do not refer to any definite territory or country, or to the reappearance of an Italian representative at your deliberations, even though the latter is a notable event; I am thinking rather of a different region and another country—that invisible, underground country without frontiers which we created, together with some who are with us here today and others who are no longer alive, during the long years of

persecution; that country of which we wish to remain free and loyal citizens.

Mention of this survival brings me to the first reflection that I propose to bring to your notice today. Nowadays, whenever a meeting of writers, or artists, or 'intellectuals' in general yields to the temptation of pronouncing judgement on men's conduct during the tragic events of recent years, it is essential that somebody should undertake the task of putting them on guard against any hypocritical self-satisfaction. What, in short, I intend to say, is that it will be agreed on mature reflection that writers, artists and intellectuals in general have no right whatever to boast of any disinterested, far-sighted or courageous part played by them in the sad decades through which we have passed. And despite the fact that this statement is entirely inconsistent with any feeling of self-satisfaction of the kind to which I have alluded, I notice that it is sufficient to make it to secure general assent. No special effort of memory is required on the part of those who might desire to check its accuracy, for the painful experiences through which we have passed are only those of yesterday. Events have once more demonstrated that the professional exercise of letters or of the arts does not, in itself, provide any guarantee of moral integrity or strength of character. Events have shown that wherever a crisis has overtaken a ruling class the majority of writers and artists have not remained immune from the aberrations and perplexities inseparable from that state of crisis. If we widen our perspective to include the whole of the educated section of society, we can say that these same events have demonstrated the complete ineffectiveness of the so-called humanities, that is to say, of those very studies that should by definition have a formative effect on character. But I hasten to add that it should not be thought that this is a feature characteristic of, or peculiar to, our time.

Why? To me the explanation seems plain. The choice between liberty and slavery presents itself to the writer in the form of a choice between his sincerity and his willingness to conform. That choice has to be made at a level of the mind at which literary or artistic notions or aesthetic sensibility count for very little. It is clear that, with all the difficulties, vexations and limitations imposed by external circumstances, what really matters is something very different indeed.

It is for this reason that intellectuals have always shared the virtues and failings of their people, their social environment and their time; and it is naïve to attempt to postulate an 'intellectual' platform for the crisis of our time, a unanimous position based on any general principles. I should like, with your permission, to remind you that artists, in addition to the ordinary external limitations imposed on them by society—difficulties which they share with other men and which are superable even if they involve sacrifice—are faced with difficulties of professional psychology which constitute a far more intimate threat to their capacity for choice, which in extreme cases may atrophy all normal sense of responsibility.

It seems almost as though the exclusive exercise of the profession of letters or of the arts, with prolonged absorption of all the faculties in the creative effort, can produce a monstrous displacement or deformation of the personality which may cause the artist to run a grave risk of losing the ordinary sense of the relations between himself and others, the ordinary sense of rights and duties, the ordinary standards of moral judgement and of ending by feeling himself a world unto himself and the actual centre of the universe. The intellect, diverted from its proper function, which is the humble and courageous service of truth, is degraded to the task of perpetually chasing after ephemeral success and perpetually providing justification for the inevitable self-betrayals that result from that pursuit. Every important social event, every political or social change, dictatorship, war, revolution, pestilence or famine, comes to be judged by the changes that it may involve for the artist's own reputation. Unpopularity comes to be regarded as the worst of all evils. Modern psychology has given a name that you all know to this illness of the mind, but, fortunately for the reputation of our profession, the psychologists will never be able to provide even approximate statistics of those who are afflicted by it.

Besides, morality can never be measurable by statistics, nor can there be any statistical register of those thinkers and artists who, fully aware of historical development as a whole, or clearly perceiving the sublime dignity of humanity, careless of unpopularity or of any other changes, are willing, in case of need, to oppose their own country, their own class or their own party. But we are dealing, as experience shows, with a phenomenon not

confined to the educated classes. Intellectuals as a class can neither claim to have shown exemplary conduct during the past decades, nor does there seem to me to be any justification for claiming for them now any particular function in the guidance of public opinion. It is certainly dangerous and difficult to talk of a moral *élite* in any country; but in any case it would be extremely hazardous to suggest that it coincided with that country's intellectual *élite*. I hasten to add that this disagreeable conclusion is intended to be a plain statement of historical fact; it is not intended to establish any standard of relative values, which would be absurd. It might, in fact, be the starting-point for a longer speech on the place of the intellect and the pretensions of the intellectual.

This latter is so widespread that to seek to condemn any particular national group of writers, as was done at this conference a few days ago, appears to me to be an unworthy piece of scapegoat hunting. To be perfectly frank, I do not know if, in recent years, there has been a single country or a single party in which the intellect has not been degraded to the humiliating function of an instrument of war. I assure you that I do not intend to hurt anyone's feelings or to cast the least doubt on the good faith of those writers who actively and at their own risk and peril took part in the ideological war. What I mean to say is that now that the war is over, nobody can deny that the use made by the military leaders of the work of those writers and of the eloquent slogans invented by them was identical with the use made of this or that war weapon. In fact, as soon as there was no more use for them, the principles of liberty, human dignity and universal security were put back into store, just as if they were tanks. That is why we now have this peace, which is not peace but at best an uncertain armistice.

I feel I can ignore the risk of being misunderstood. A man of the resistance, of a resistance that lasted for twenty years and was ready to last for centuries if necessary, of a resistance that by any calculation began and developed when many of the future wartime opponents of Fascism admired and supported it, I can assure you that my words are inspired by no unforeseen sense of disillusionment. At no moment or phase of the war did I doubt that the solidarity in fact established between the cause of democratic liberties and that of a definite *bloc* of powers, though it might be a highly important historical coincidence and a useful,

opportune and necessary alliance, was not, and could not be, complete or permanent. It was an uncomfortably critical position towards the Allies, but it made it possible to forecast with relative ease what is actually happening now. The key to that forecast, and it is still valid today, is in the following warning: never identify the cause of moral values with that of a state. The spirit bloweth where it listeth. It is clerical presumption to wish to prescribe for it any definite domicile.

But why continue with such pessimistic thoughts in such a festive assembly as this and in such circumstances as today's? I should not recall these things merely for the purposes of recrimination. But, actually, these questions are always topical. At every congress of writers is there not some significant allusion to new and inevitable ideological crusades? But these zealots must be told firmly that there can be no graver threat to moral values in any period than to regard them as historically bound to the old political and social forms. Only by the sacrifice of intellectual honesty is it possible to identify the cause of truth with that of an army. But if siding with one antagonistic power against another is intellectually dishonest now, on the political plane it is a dangerous error, because it means capitulating in advance to the threat of another world catastrophe, admitting its inevitability, providing its justification, and hastening its occurrence. This is certainly the most dangerous aberration to which an intellectual can succumb. But we must not conceal from ourselves the deep causes that make such aberrations possible.

The military victory of the so-called democratic powers has left unsolved the problems from which Fascism and National-Socialism arose. A certain cynical clear-sightedness has deprived the men of this post-war period of the naïve illusions of the last. Those among the young who fail to satisfy the whole of their intellectual appetite in biting their finger-nails find no better nourishment than the meagre left-overs of the formerly despised nineteenth century. And in these conditions it is obvious that that desperate aridity of mind that Nietzsche called 'European nihilism', which some considered peculiar to Nazism, was by no means merely the result of military defeat, but is to be found in a more or less acute form in all countries. The denunciation and punishment of a few scapegoats is certainly not sufficient to save ourselves from it.

I know of no party, no church, no institution that can at present

be considered uncontaminated by this terrible scourge. Nihilism is making a pretence of a creed in which one does not believe; it is the smoke of incense before an empty shrine; it is the exaltation of self-sacrifice and heroism as ends in themselves; it is liberty that is not in the service of life; liberty that has to have recourse to suicide or crime in order to prove itself. It is the subordination of truth and justice to selfish utility; it is the primacy of tactics and cunning in every form of collective relationship. Every one of you will have shared with me the experience of having been appealed to by this or that political party to protest against some injustice to which its adherents were said to have been subjected in some part of the world. But you will have noticed, as I did, that these same parties remain mute and indifferent when the same or even greater injustices are committed in countries governed by their friends. Similarly, we hear vehement protests by the highest religious authorities from time to time because the men or the interests of the Church are molested in some country. But so far not one of us has had the pleasure of hearing the Pope protesting against the persecution by Catholic governments of their political enemies or the adherents of other faiths. Thus we now observe (and there have not been lacking some small instances of it during this conference) how those very men, who, during recent years, suffered most from, and rightly protested against, the inhuman madness of the Nazi racial doctrines, have no objection now to imposing bans and restrictions on their conquered adversaries of yesterday that reproduce very faithfully the essential *motifs* of the theories that they condemn. But justice invoked only when it is convenient is nihilist justice, a mask for crude and naked utilitarianism.

Now it must be evident to every serious person that no judgement of the crisis of our time can be formulated except on the basis of its universal character. It is not by finding scapegoats that we can obliterate from our consciousness the awareness of this general decadence, of this universal guilt. This is not the occasion to recall the ways and means by which the human race has overcome its periods of nihilist aridity in the past. But you will permit me to observe that it would be a mistake for writers to expect their salvation from others. What is at stake is not a way of writing or speaking or behaving, but a way of feeling. Salvation lies not in the profession of any ideas or theories, or in joining this

or that political party or this or that Church, because the decay, as anyone can observe for himself, is common to believers in the most varied doctrines. Before any useful distinction can be made between the various groups or trends or parties, there is a question of fundamental honesty to solve, and that is to find the inalienable sense of one's own responsibility, to re-establish sincere, direct and lasting contact with the tragic reality that underlies the human state. For the Christian the symbol of that tragic reality is the Cross. The human anatomy reminds us of the Cross by its very shape. In our personal life it is the permanent unease of the human heart, not to be allayed by any progress of civilization. On the historical plane it is principally the sufferings of the poor, known by different names in different times and places. In China they are called coolies; in South America—peones; among the Arabs—fellahin: or they can be called simply proletarians or Jews. But always and everywhere we find the same reality of suffering, perhaps the only really universal reality of human history.

I ask you to believe that I am sorry if a note of vehemence, foreign to my intentions, has crept into my speech. My intention, I repeat, was simply to re-state in the vast and brilliant world of letters a certain presence that is also a survival; to re-state a determination of fidelity, a determination not to betray.

[Translated by ERIC MOSBACHER]

## ALAN PRYCE-JONES DOING GOOD

WHEN she awoke, although it confused her, the room was not strange. The horrible high windows behind their torn silk curtains glittered with offensive familiarity, and if she lay confused it was because in a waking dream she had been behind the friendly dormers of Abbotslea. Now, the rising light in the park and a low voice from the room adjoining suddenly reminded her that a dreadful interview lay ahead.

Tea was brought in, and the post. 'Lady Worsley', 'Lady Worsley', 'Lady Worsley', and an irritating circular for 'Lady Jocelyn Worsley'. The tiresomeness and inaccuracy of people

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were uppermost in her mind at the thought of her day, and it was with relief that she found a letter from Mums on the beloved Abbotslea deckle-edged paper. Blue, with a dark-blue heading and a crackling dark-blue sheath inside the envelope. Darling Mums was thanking her for her visit: '... so wonderful to have our little Jokey with us again... those splendid Talks must have done us both good... Daddy seems years younger since he knows you have at last decided'—this was the crucial point, and she stopped skimming at once—'at last decided to speak out. Dear heart, it's the only way and especially with his temperament. The shock will do him good, for whatever Daddy and Bobs may say I know he is all right. Daddy and I have always said that love is everything.'

The low voice from the next room spoke again, drowned by four muffled rattles as the curtains were drawn back: It was already nine-fifteen, she noticed, and he was scarcely awake. At Abbotslea everyone was in the dining-room by now, and breakfast was half over. The Daimler would be on the gravel and Daddy folding *The Times* into his little bag: Daddy at fifty, Daddy at sixty, Daddy at nearly seventy. She dropped the empty envelopes one by one on to the floor.

Ellis came in again with ironed underclothes on one arm. 'Put those envelopes in the basket, will you,' she said, 'and turn on my bath.' Then she got quickly out of bed in a moment of decision, briefly paused to comb her hair, and opened Matthew's door. He said immediately: 'Good morning, darling; I was just coming to see you'.

You wouldn't think, she reflected, standing still in the doorway, that he was ever just about to do something. He was up, it is true, but in the posture she most disliked, lying on a sofa with a rug to his knees. He held a once-famous Book of Beauty in his hand and added with elaborate skill a monocle and hunting-crop in pencil to the profile of Lady Diana Cooper in *The Miracle*. 'Look,' he said, turning the pages for her, and showing a week's work. Nothing more than a pair of black stockings here, a gold tooth there, the suggestion of a wig, a throat-muscle stiffened by indignation, a diamond fender aslant and a champagne glass popped into the royal hand.

'One ought to stick to biographies really,' he said. 'This sort of thing is funnier left alone.'

She made no reply, crossed the room and kissed him. He hadn't shaved.

It was in January, and the house was cold. The fire in Matthew's room, newly lit, seemed prosperous but ineffective. Besides, these high rooms never got really warm, and now, with most of the house shut, it was worse than usual. She held her hands to an oil stove beside the sofa. 'I can't think how you can stand it in here,' she said.

Not only the cold, but the room itself appalled her. She had insisted—after all, it was her own money—on doing up the larger room next door. She had collected furniture from all over the house for it, and bought exactly the right bed. Whereas Matthew kept an ugly Victorian paper on the walls and then plastered them with absurd pictures, all utterly wrong. Cotmans and Modiglianis and Bernini drawings, and a Constantin Guys faced her above a mahogany washhand stand. There were wax fruits and clocks and miniatures and Meissen figures all over the place, and from a gilded leather screen which kept the draught from the writing-table a brown suit hung on a coat-hanger. A lot of books were in piles on the floor.

She turned her face to the light, half-moved by the Madonna photograph in Matthew's hand. I must tell him, she thought, lifting her head with a wide air of rapture; I must tell him—and she set one foot on a footstool; tell him—and she let the yellow light of the morning, the filtered park light, play over her face until its brightness forced her eyes up to the pelmet. A figure-head, a Madonna on the prow, she thought. And now I shall start.

'Are you going to do any work?' Her voice was beautifully calm. He looked haunted at once. 'I haven't the slightest idea,' he said. 'I shan't do a thing if you come interrupting me, anyway.'

'I'm only saying good morning.'

His calm at once matched hers. 'Choose me a tie,' he said, smiling, and before she had time to recollect herself she was opening a cupboard, doing exactly what she ought not to, humouring him, mothering him, while he watched her cunningly over the top of his book. 'Yes, that one, that blue one. Oh, chuck it down anywhere.'

Of course, he was thoroughly alert now, wondering what was wrong. She was careful to look abstracted, not angry; not hurt; not ill; not miserable; abstracted, as though she were remembering

exactly what she wanted to say. There was a mirror in the room which floated her, a black shade, upon the green of the park. Quicksilver behind the glass gave a needed lustre to her hair; early morning combs twinkled almost romantically in the light. And she took in the two of them as a handsome couple: the redness of his face and a silly shy gape were quietened in reflection, while she—she drew up an inch on tip-toe—she really understood at last what people meant when they called her a Primitive; not quite fanciful enough to be a Madonna, perhaps, but bearing evidently her sorrow. She straightened under the burden, tucked in a fold of her dressing-gown, and as she moved in silence about the room, from the cupboard to the screen, as she reached, with an effort, to throw the tie over the shoulder of the coat-hanger, she caught a rising self-importance in her own gaze. The big pieces stay tranquilly in their squares as if nothing impended, but the pawns are out on either side, he must be saying to himself; he seemed startled to notice, not for the first time, how easily affection vanishes even when love remains.

Finch came into the room with a pair of shoes in his hand. He took out the trees, opened the laces and loosened the tongues. To break the silence, while his clothes were taken with proper deliberation to a chair by the fire, Matthew said in an easy and impersonal tone: 'Now that you're back you müstn't get bored. You ought to start asking people to stay again.'

'What will Finch say to that?' Jocelyn asked, since she prided herself on her simplicity with the servants. 'Not to mention poor Mrs. Crabbet. No, darling, we can't possibly have anybody just now.'

'They would make their own beds,' he suggested.

'You know what Ellis is like, always on the run. That wouldn't do at all. And besides—'

She was watching Finch fold the underclothes with writing-paper precision before the fire.

'Besides what?'

'I mean, visits and things are such an interruption for you. And I suppose it's only Clare you want, anyway.'

For Clare had become a symbol of escape. Knowing that he would never have the energy to act, she dangled Clare before him as an easy reproach. The possibility of Clare, they felt, did them both good. But because of Finch he said nothing. The

ribbon of Lady Diana's monocle needed shading in. He took a hard lead and set to, with an air of expecting Jocelyn to go out of the room before they were alone. But when the door closed quietly she was still there.

'Darling,' she said. The rook had moved out to the middle of the board. 'Is it this house?' she went on. He looked so pathetic. 'If you could work better in London, you've only got to say so. Or get a real job.'

'You oughtn't to go to Abbotslea,' he said, 'it always upsets you.' The Book of Beauty was thrust under his knees. 'Now what is it this time?'

'One can't help noticing the contrast. I don't know how you *can* sit there all the morning doing nothing, while people like Bob, and Daddy who's nearly seventy—' She was speaking quicker and stopped abruptly. 'Anyhow, one does notice a contrast.'

While she spoke, he looked round his defences. They lay on the floor in one corner of the room under a Degas bronze: a volume of newspaper cuttings, not up to date, a novel about Eton called *The Little Victims*, published anonymously, and an expensive narrow book, *Poems 1926-1932*. As outworks to these, countless pamphlets were stacked about. The Georgian Society's reports, with his name on the committee page; something from the Wine and Food Society; communications from the Tate Gallery, with his name among the trustees; C.E.M.A. catalogues, naming him among the collectors; memorials from the Saintsbury Club; a manifesto or two of the days before the war, all signed by the same small tribe of tireless peers, publishers and back-benchers, all speaking with authority for Polish intellectuals, German painters, Spanish students and the preservation of Regency Brighton. From recent years there was a stack of notebooks behind a black-and-silver tower of gramophone records.

'And they expect so much of you,' Jocelyn was saying. 'They know what you could do if you'd only start. Everyone just loved that review in *Time and Tide*. Mums says she made all the Reigate people give up the *Spectator* and take *Time and Tide* instead. Only you haven't done a thing since.'

'I can't, I have to wait,' he said.

She crossed the room and kissed the top of his head. 'You don't face life,' she began, calming the threat of his anger by the

beautiful composure of her grief. One gave so much. The mirror showed her in the act of giving. Not for herself, oh no ! One gave for the sake of a far-off possibility, a chance which Matthew would never acknowledge, now a mere hope. He needed quiet, and he must be given quiet. He needed people, and he must be given people. He needed love and presents and visits to the sun. He was given them all. And in return he only had to stir a little finger. He had only to discover something like baroque art, or write a ballet for Lifar, or fight in the Spanish War, or revive Winterhalter, or conceive the idea of all-white furniture, or make photography *important*. She saw exactly what he needed: a success. 'I've tried everything,' she began, but then there was a low knocking on the door to answer. 'Yes, in five minutes, Ellis. Don't make it smell too strong. And I'll wear my yellow suit.' In no time, unless she hurried, Ellis would be listening behind the hinge. It was the first time for weeks that she had really hated him. And so with every intention of giving pain she changed the meaning of her phrase, not deliberately, but because, against the background of a chilling bath and Ellis taking gossip to the kitchen, the act of not facing life seemed now laden with deeper cruelty to herself. 'Do you ever stop to think what it costs to live in a house like this?' she asked.

He looked across the winter grass of the park, brown and sprung like a sheepskin, over a little lake to the line of sooty hills, closely wooded, which barred an outside world of slack-heaps and mine-workings.

'Not more,' he said, mulishly, 'than it costs to live at Abbotslea.'

From Abbotslea through the bottle-glass in the windows there was a distorted view of Japanese maples beside square stone pools, and, for one brief moment in spring, lanes of petticoat-coloured *prunus* leading to the tennis courts.

She said : 'When Daddy found Abbotslea it was only a cottage. It was called Hen Hall. You know he's done the whole thing himself, bit by bit, as he could afford to ; and Mums has given her life to the garden. Of course, it costs a lot, but then they've worked for it ever since we were little.'

'You mean I don't earn enough ?'

'You don't earn anything at all. That's what I mean,' she said. But it was not really what she meant. Even in her anger she skirted the irrevocable: she dared not insinuate the hot-water system, the

library curtains, the tiles in the kitchen, the hundred and one things out-of-doors; worse still, the intimacies; the car they rode in, the beds they made love in? And she watched him trying to be reasonable.

'You can't really compare the two houses,' he said, casting back to a safe theme, 'or the sort of life that goes on in them.'

'I see what you're driving at,' she interrupted hotly. 'I'm not so stupid as you think. Well, there's something I've wanted to tell you for years, Matthew. You have no self-respect.'

'You tell me that each time you lose your temper,' he said with a tranquillity which he knew would annoy her. 'Darling, don't be so quarrelsome,' and he held out his hands to her, unexpectedly touched by a single tear on her cheek.

'You haven't any self-respect in anything. Why do you want people in the house? Because they flatter your vanity. I love you,' she said dramatically, 'or I wouldn't tell you this. I know what this beastly house means to you, and I'm glad to help you live in it. That's all I've ever wanted to do: to help you. Whatever Bob and Daddy have said I've always stood up for you. Because I know what you could do if only you'd try.'

He said nothing.

'Now I'm going to have my bath. We're not going to quarrel, Matthew, and you're going to pull yourself together. I shall come back at eleven and see how you're getting on. You can lunch up here on a tray. I've only got to tell Finch. Though why you don't work in the library I can't imagine; and let Ellis have a proper clean-round.'

She was perfectly composed again, and half-smiling as she walked through to the bathroom.

One must be fair, Matthew thought. She has Aunt Rachel at Datchet with the impeccable chain-smoking girls who have done so well in the war. She has Uncle Ted at Limpsfield who pulled everything round so cleverly after the crash. She has Bob who is already a partner. She has a long background of good oak furniture, bankers' walnut, indifferent primitives and potted cannas in copper baths. She has her immense solitude: that, above all. She can never fill it, but I can fill mine. She will never have children; I may, at any moment, make something extraordinary of my own.

He closed his eyes and recalled with delight the parcel of six

*Little Victims* arriving from the publishers. If one sat down to a foolscap block and managed three pages a day at two hundred words to the page, something the size of a book would be ready by the end of May. Or, if that were too long to wait, one could produce a lot of small things and scatter them, month by month, round HORIZON and Orion and the *Cornhill*, and . . . or write a play, only about fifteen thousand words, really; or discover a new cultural country. Sir Matthew Worsley's book on the Finno-Ugrian sources of domestic stucco-work in the Bergenland is little short of a revelation. And one could expand one's public self. Jocelyn would like that best of all, he reflected. From the outside it must look so easy to be Sir Matthew Worsley, to keep a fine house, a rich wife and civilized tastes. People said: 'Oughtn't we to get Matthew Worsley on the National Theatre?' They said: 'Worsley would do the notes on Kokoschka quite well enough; it might make him buy one.' But the thing needn't rest there. At the thought of that single tear he had melted utterly, twitched up the rug, pulled the oil stove closer. She must be lying in her bath, crying perhaps. She couldn't have children; well, neither could he. It would be disloyal to try. But he might lend another Maillol to the Tate, he could start a collection of vernis Martin; and, for a beginning, be rude to visitors, make a decisive gesture. It could always be put right afterwards. . . . He dozed. And the *Book of Beauty* frightened him when it fell, with pencil, rubber and spectacles.

Jocelyn lay in her bath with pads on her eyes. She had read the letter from Mums again. 'Daddy seems years younger since he knows you have at last decided to speak out.' At that the tears returned, and she had hurried into the bathroom for fear Ellis noticed something. It was all quite useless. She said none of the things she meant to. Again she had hurt Matthew's feelings instead of helping and inspiring him. She hadn't even spoken out. Were he only a diplomat, even an editor. Could he so much as evolve a planning scheme of some sort or get into Parliament and go somewhere on a delegation. One thought of Uncle Ted: 'Don't seem to hear much of that man of yours nowadays'. And at Datchet, though nobody ever breathed a word of criticism, they spoke, she fancied, with particular emphasis of the other side of the family. Daddy, and at his age too, was opening new branches everywhere. Bob was off to South Africa to see about

getting off Income Tax. In spite of hard times Mums had been allowed two more garden boys to scrub the birches down—the only way to keep their stems pink. And there was Matthew scribbling in notebooks, or drawing spurs and a diabolo on photographs of the Queen.

No sound came from his room while she dressed. She listened at the hinge when Ellis was in the bathroom, and heard him blow his nose. At the thought of him hurt and unhappy perhaps, weakness overcame her. She would have liked to rush in with a big kiss on her lips, only she could think of no explanation for so doing, and she was afraid she might break down altogether. On the other hand, the thought of hostility between them was unbearable. It was therefore with joy that she found him, at eleven, when gently she opened the door, sitting at his table, pen in hand. He began slowly to write just as the door opened, and for a second seemed not to feel her eyes on him. At last he looked up, still a little blank, and at once, putting her fingers to her lips, she murmured: 'Then I won't disturb you, Matthew darling,' and pulled the door to again. For that he deserved his treat. She opened her little morocco writing-case and took out a sheet of the best writing-paper with the engraving of the house by Rex Whistler at its head. She began: 'Dearest Clare, if you don't mind the cold it will be wonderful for us to have you here for the week-end of the . . .' There she stopped. It would look friendlier to wait until luncheon and discuss the date with Matthew.

He, next door, on the big foolscap block, had got no further than 'Clare'. Dearest Clare? Darling Clare? The words had a committal ring. Besides, he rather enjoyed the sudden plunge into a letter. And he wrote such good letters, too. And at luncheon, when she lied and said, 'I've spoken to Mrs. Crabbet and she doesn't mind for once, so I thought perhaps we might ask Clare'; when she said that, he lied and said, 'Really, I'd quite forgotten about it'. At the same time, he noticed the shade of anxiety in her eyes, and he thought, with intense irritation, that she could hardly expect him to achieve anything with the house full of people all the time. So that, when he spoke, the words were totally unexpected by either of them: 'I've decided', he said, 'to go to London for a day or two. For my work.' She hardly dared ask him about it. 'Is it—?' 'It's on the Martin family,' he invented. 'You know, vernis Martin.'

She didn't know, but she was loyal. 'Will it mean a collection?' It might, after all, turn out really wonderful, like Italian nigger-consoles, or porphyry sideboards or having simply *everything* Regency. Didn't you know, the Worsleys practically invented Martin.

'Of course I'll look in at Partridge's. But it's the tables in the Wallace Collection I must see and later the panels at Cluny.'

So at last the things were biggish for once. Her eyes gleamed with pride and she kissed him.

'And what about Clare?'

'Come to that, I could see her in London. Anyway, the change will do me good,' he said. 'All the good in the world,' she replied, oh so tenderly.

## JOHN RUSSELL THE OLD AGE OF ANDRÉ GIDE

MONTESQUIEU inhabits, one might say, a climate of ideal lucidity. The politest of combatants, he would seem to have little in common with the idea of a resistance writer. His conditions of work were almost comically unlike the stealth and penumbra habitual to Paulhan and Eluard. Dictating at ease in the gigantic room above the winding staircase at La Brède, drawing upon a library graded with infinite nicety from Apollonius to Gregory of Tours, and reposing his weak eyes upon a landscape planned in the English manner, Montesquieu had every reason to do well. Perhaps it is even remarkable that he should not have slumped into a routine of learned enjoyments, and should instead have perfected what Valéry called his 'brisk and rather diabolical' command of expression. Style is the best of preservatives; and when, in 1941, Bernard Grasset published the *Cahiers 1716-1755* of Montesquieu, these put fresh heart into many who read them. More than one published diary has borne witness to the movement of pride, the recall to dignity which they provoked. Some of the book's lessons were absolute, as when Montesquieu says: 'Moi, je n'ai pour régime que de faire diète quand j'ai fait des excès, et de dormir quand j'ai veillé, et de ne prendre d'ennui ni par les

chagrins, ni par les plaisirs, ni par le travail, ni par l'oisiveté'. Others were relative, and bore directly upon the misfortunes of Europe. Not all were apposite; few readers, for instance, can have been struck with the truth of the remark that 'the English, being accustomed to happiness, kill themselves when the slightest thing goes wrong'. More apt, and couched in a perfection of language which is in itself the emblem of a great nation, were Montesquieu's lines upon the astounding resilience of France, and her power to survive all that defeat, bodily sickness and loss of population could do to destroy her.

André Gide was among those who fell with pleasure upon this discreetly roborative volume. The 'tranquil and radiant optimism' of Montesquieu was a condition to which Gide himself has always aspired, and none could gauge better than he the difficulty of maintaining it. Perhaps the most pertinent, for Gide, of Montesquieu's comments was that in which he attributed France's powers of resistance to the extreme diversity of her peoples; this offered a natural barrier to the percolation throughout France of any one brand of evil. Himself the most various of men, Gide, in a lifetime of work, has offered in his own person the image of a diversity which dates from before his birth. Just as Victor Hugo had borne the double mark of Breton and Lorrain strains, so Gide united within himself two abruptly contrasting breeds of Frenchman. As he wrote just fifty years ago, 'Né à Paris, d'un père Uzétien et d'une mère Normande, où voulez-vous, Monsieur Barrès, que je m'enracine?' Both landscapes pleased him—thyme and lavender in the deep woods of Normandy, and the scorched *garrigue* of Provence; the white apple-trees of the north, and in the south the white almond. Two tongues, the Oc and the Oil ('l'épais jargon normand, le parler chantant du midi'), awakened his sensibility to language; in religion the Catholic blood of his mother tugged one way, and his father's Languedocian Protestantism the other. From the moment of his conception, Gide was in the 'état de dialogue' which he has turned to such memorable account. A great collector of contradictions, he is too often remembered merely for the perverse or terrible aspects which he has detected in characters of seemingly unblemished virtue; but although no one could surpass him in the discovery, within ourselves, of the forger, the coward, the self-murderer and the felon, these are simply the lowest, blackest reaches of his

universe. He has created with equal art, and for nearly sixty years has pursued under one form or another, the image of an attainable happiness. Gide is not a teacher in the sense that Claudel and Wells are teachers; no author is more indifferent to personal dominion over his readers. *Les Nourritures Terrestres* this year celebrates its jubilee; and Gide is still saying, as he said in the epilogue to that extraordinary work: 'Throw away my book; do not let it satisfy you. Do not suppose that *your* truth could be discovered by somebody else; of that, more than of anything else, you should be ashamed.' Gide has always told his readers to look within themselves for deliverance; perhaps this is why he has aroused the hatred of so curious and so revengeful a rabble of ushers, functionaries, heads of families, and dons.

Gide's recent visit to this country gave the signal for a number of courteous tributes to the man who, more than any other, has sustained in our time the antiquated notion that an artist's first duty is to his art. These tributes, however, did not always betray any close acquaintance with Gide's work. In the pages, indeed, of that great newspaper which most of us regard as the last sanctuary of the cultivated daily journalist, there appeared the statement that *Les Nourritures Terrestres* was 'Gide's best-known novel'. So egregious a bloomer may be attributed in part to the general decline of literary culture. It could not have occurred fifty years ago, and it would not have occurred, I think, in the case of Valéry or Kafka or von Hofmannsthal, were these writers still living. 'Living' is, indeed, the operative word; for Gide, at seventy-eight, is writing better than ever. In England we are unused to writers who write equally well at all periods of their lives. Gide is, however, the type of the giant professional, the man whose life is organized exclusively in terms of writing. We have, of course, our assiduous workers; and we have our minor, but authentic, masters of literary art; but there is a diligence beyond the dreams of Arnold Bennett, and a perfection beyond the Chinese restraints of Sir Max Beerbohm, and these find their incarnation in André Gide. This author is, after all, a master of language; but he is also a master of life, and it is this double power which gives him, in a distracted age, the stature of a universal doctor. Since 1939 he has written, or contributed to, about a dozen volumes; resolute scavengers will also discover (in *L'Arche*, *Le Littéraire*, and *Les Cahiers de la Pléiade*, for example)

smaller articles and fragments not yet reprinted. With the exception of *Thésée*, none is a major work; but all disclose some new aspect of a great illuminant.

Formality compels us to regard Gide as an old man; but formality alone would betray his age to an innocent reader of, let us say, the essays on Poussin and Goethe, the autobiographical fragment 'Jeunesse', or the passage in the *Journal 1939-42*, which relates to his rediscovery of the concise and wilful mastery of Tacitus. His translation of *Hamlet*, again, may at times fall strangely upon English ears; but the continuous effort of fidelity, the struggle to reproduce in workable French the extravagances of Elizabethan syntax—these are the work of no ailing intelligence. Gide's object in the last eight years has been to caulk and clew up as many as possible of the researches which a lifetime of universal curiosity has led him to undertake. Readers of his earlier journals will know something of their variety. Gide is, for example, one of the many writers in whom the framework of a Protestant inheritance continues to vibrate, however incongruously, within the structure of a very different outlook upon existence. In itself, this fact is a commonplace; but he has been able to prolong, even to perpetuate, this discrepancy, and to make it the subject of an endless ambulatory debate about man's relation to God. Perhaps the management of this *état de dialogue* is Gide's central contribution to human happiness. What might elsewhere be merely an enervating restlessness is here a principle of life; painful disquiet, in Gide's view, becomes a state of grace. No aspect of life is hidden from Gide; from Mallarmé to Lenin, from Chopin to colonial administration, from the alcoves of Laclos to the growth of the elm and the gentian, everything touches him; and he gives to everything that same fixity of regard which, two generations ago, made him unsurpassable as the portraitist of d'Annunzio and Stefan George. In certain respects, his work could even be seen as a triumph of prophetic intelligence. In the stout volume of his *Morceaux Choisis*, for instance, there occurs a short passage, dated 1904, in which the whole problem of Germany is rehearsed. Gide has not, in the highest degree, the gifts of a novelist, but he has the faculty of attracting in his direction characters from real life who have the symbolic power of Turgeniev's Rudin or Bazarof. The young German in *Conversation avec un Allemand* had excellent qualities; among them a

prodigious capacity for work. But, quite simply, he cannot tell the truth; the truth is not for him, in any sense, a steadyng magnetic pole. From this there proceeds his complete collapse as a moral being. He cannot conceive the truth—even as a point from which he would necessarily wish to diverge. From such a tiny nucleus (though Gide expressly remarks that the incident need not be representative) great upheavals follow. It is precisely this involvement in his age which repeatedly gives Gide the quality of a precursor. It is he who supported Kierkegaard in 1911, Malraux in 1927, and Sartre in 1937; who, foreseeing the importance of Blake to the twentieth century, translated *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* into French; and who said, between 1933 and 1937, everything that need be said, in 1947, about Stalinism. André Malraux, with the equipment of a young Tolstoy and the experience of a T. E. Lawrence, is the only other living author to have penetrated so deeply and so imaginatively into the causes of our distress. In the autumn of 1946 he spoke at a UNESCO meeting in terms which, in their context, were original and provocative. I do not think I shall be forcing my case if I suggest that Malraux's moving rebuttal of the collective illusion could be summarized in a line, written six years earlier, from Gide's *Journal*: 'Le monde ne peut être sauvé que par quelques-uns'. All this could be true, however, and Gide could still be no more than a supremely intelligent man. Other writers are sometimes right about international affairs (some, indeed, are never right about anything else), but there is no department of life in which Gide has not something valuable and arresting to say. For professional writers, moreover, there is the fascination of a style which can encompass every variety of statement—from a Stendhalian directness to the poetic prose which, from *Thésée* back to the *Nourritures*, has realized at any rate some part of Baudelaire's dream of an ideal prose idiom.

Small wonder, then, that Gide is among those masters who (as he recently wrote of Goethe) 'offer themselves to our admiration, to our devotion, and even to our hatred, in a multiplicity of ways; our minds hesitate upon the threshold of their work, or for a long time ramble delightedly, as if in some spellbound Broceliande'. Arthurian analogies apart, Gide's work has added to human dignity, and he must henceforward be one of those luminous figures by which a whole period is judged.

In the autumn of 1940 he was invited by the *Figaro* to describe the sort of literary effort which he believed to be most useful and appropriate to the stricken state of France. His reply defined, as it was meant to do, the work in which he himself was engaged. 'I hope', he wrote, 'that our stricken France will never relinquish her master-quality: criticism. I speak of criticism not so much as a *genre*, but as one of the rarest of qualities, and the most indispensable to any true culture. In this France shows herself incomparable; the quality revealed itself as much in the tragedies of Racine or the poems of Baudelaire, as in the *Caractères* of La Bruyère or the novels of Stendhal. It is not a quality which gets in the way of poetry, but one which coaxes it slowly towards perfection. Criticism is in great danger, these days, and . . . we should strive, be it only in silence, to recapture the qualities and virtues of the critic.' Gide began to compose for the *Figaro* a sequence of imaginary interviews. These were not so much true dialogues, in the tradition of Fénelon, Landor and Fontenelle, as simply ways of keeping a writer's mind in motion, and of presenting to readers of the *Figaro* ideas in pemmican form. Sometimes they deal with topicalities; sometimes with problems of language—for, as Gide remarks, 'un peuple qui tient à sa langue tient bon'; and sometimes one senses that, just as a frost-bitten explorer must revive his stricken parts with the warmth of his hands, so Gide is trying to revive, in his readers, the idea of national dignity. Sometimes he returns the Medusa-like gaze of Victor Hugo—baffled, as all modern writers must be, by the limitless fecundity, the astounding verbal sureness of this confounding master; or the centenary of Mallarmé prompts him to exalt, after Balthazar de Castiglione, the value of a prose style which, by evoking the subtleties proper to even the most commonplace words, 'gives in some way an additional authority to the style, and forces the reader to go more slowly, to raise himself above his normal level, to think more carefully about what is being said to him, and . . . by tiring himself a little, to taste the pleasure of doing something difficult'. (Readers of *Thésée* will be able to annotate this passage.) And sometimes he indulged the impulse to encouragement which has made him one of the godfathers of French writing from Signoret to Michaux; and in December 1941 he could say 'Patientez! patientez encore. Votre heure viendra, futures valeurs de la France. . . .'

Of the other longer pieces, *Jeunesse*, though written a decade ago, was not given to the public until 1945. Its story dates from the time, more than half a century ago, when Gide was mayor of a small town in Normandy. As often elsewhere, Gide has written the history of a contradiction: more explicity, of the fact that the most alert and engaging of his tenants, the only one with whom he could talk with profit, was also the perpetrator of one of the most abhorred of crimes. *Jeunesse* is a Gidian subject, and Mulot, the handsome culprit, with his downy glance and mutton-chop whiskers, is a very Gidian figure. This fragment is written in a less alembicated style than *Thésée*, but with the art by which a paragraph on comparative land drainage becomes as compelling as the Venetian nocturne in the *Nourritures Terrestres*.

Convinced admirers of Gide will wish to possess, along with *Jeunesse*, another Swiss venture: *Le Retour*. This consists of a short essay on Raymond Bonheur, some letters which Gide wrote to him at intervals over forty years, and one act of the libretto of a comic opera in which it was once proposed that Gide and Bonheur should collaborate. Enthusiasts will cherish this tribute of friendship, which discloses, moreover, an unexpected gift for the *répliques* of operetta. In belauding the climate of Assouan, Gide's Horace is perfectly in character with his creator; but with couplets such as these we are on new ground:

Eh bien moi, pour l'attendre,  
Je crois que je mettrais une robe plus tendre.

Toi dans ta robe bleue et blanche,  
Moi dans ma veste du dimanche.

These are the ceremonious salutes of an old friend; to the public at large, Gide has made gestures of a larger, but more formal kind. In some *Feuillets*, written just after the war of 1914-18, he remarked that Goethe, Racine and Poussin were artists of the rarest sort, in that they had brought all their parts to perfection. With others, such as Balzac and Baudelaire, there was always imperfection; and it was upon the imperfections of a great man, rather than on his daunting perfections, that disciples thronged. Thus, from the *Fleurs du Mal*, imitators had carried off the macabre and voluntary strangeness, but not the perfection of style. Nobody copied *Ursule Mirouet* or the *Curé de Tours*, but rather those novels

in which Balzac lapsed below his best. With Michelangelo it was the same. In contrast, there were a few immaculates—Goethe, Racine and Poussin among them. These three were the object of sustained essays by Gide during the years of war.

In all these essays the English reader, and still more the English translator, must master the private vocabulary of Gide. Though there is in them little of the grammatical acrobacy of *Thésée*, there are certain nouns ('*valeur*', for example, and '*affirmations*') which come to us encrusted with the deposit of a lifetime of individual usage. When Gide says, for instance, that for Goethe '*tout est instruction, édification, moyen de culture; tout conspire à mener à perfection l'affirmation de soi-même et de tout être*', the seasoned reader will recognize behind the last phrase an exceptional thrust; no dictionary can give it its full weight, for Gide is one of those writers who create their own language. When, again, he says that '*son génie est fait d'ingéniosité à tirer parti représentatif et symbolique de sa perpétuelle expérimentation*', it is possible to divine, though with no malicious intent, a correspondence between this sentence and Gide's own practice as a writer. It is not that he regards the great men of the past as a hall of mirrors, but rather that, now as always, he strives to plot his own course by their example. In the *Journal 1939-42* there is an admirable objective judgement on *Hermann und Dorothea*—a book which reaches, 'towards the end, a sort of half-bourgeois, half-epical grandeur, of an extremely individual sort.... An exemplary book, accessible to every age and every class of person, to every form of intelligence, of fine teaching and fine example, and of wise counsel; after it, the literature of edification is no longer a thing of ridicule.' In the long essay (written as a preface to the Pleiade *Théâtre de Goethe*) Gide envisages the person of Goethe rather than his work. Goethe, as we can learn from the *Journal* of 1893, is one of the artists on whom Gide based his conception of the classical idea. By 1921, Raphael, Goethe and Mozart seemed to him isolated examples of what was essentially a French tradition. For Gide, the classical artist is one who renounces himself, tends always towards discretion of statement, achieves indeed a certain 'superior banality' of utterance, and modestly submits his own individuality, allowing intelligence to prevail over instinct and feeling. In 1941 other aspects of Goethe presented themselves—perhaps in answer to other preoccupations of Gide: his splendid, defensible egoism;

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his indifference to the ideas of redemption and original sin; his complaisance before worldly homage; his scientific curiosity. And, as in 1893, there were the endless sacrifices by which Goethe worked to perfect himself as an artist. There were also other traits which we shall later find reflected as permanent symbols in an imaginative work by Gide.

Goethe scholars might have technical comments to make on Gide's essay; and Professor Blunt might wish to remark on the preface to Poussin, though this artist also has been both compass and sextant to Gide since the turn of the century. Poussin's early flight to Rome put him among Gide's favourites—the men of double schooling, double loyalties—as against the passionate provincialism of Barrès. Like Descartes, Poussin thrived on foreign soil. The pondered and durable serenity of this great picture-architect, and the persuasive delight which he avowed to be the chief object of his work, find here their best memorial. Even so, the essay on *Phèdre* is a different matter. All French writers must acknowledge *Phèdre* as the supreme character-creation of their theatre; French life is itself permeated with her terrible voice, and her case ('deplorable', as Valéry noted, 'rather than exceptional') has become one of those aquarium-specimens (others are labelled Hamlet, *Oedipus*, Faust, *Aeneas*, Stephen Dedalus) in which a whole civilization can watch itself in miniature shape. The role itself is called by Gide 'bulky, various, complicated and rich in contradictions'; but, like his collaborator and admired friend J. L. Barrault, Gide does not take *Phèdre* out of the play, but rather seeks to re-engage her in the elaborate mechanism which Racine has designed for her destruction. Though written in the form of injunctions to a young actress, the essay on *Phèdre* is much more than a manual of stage deportment. Implicitly, Gide puts Racine among the great pagan authors. Venus and Neptune, he suggests, are the ruling powers in this play, and *Phèdre* herself has none of the elegiac helplessness which has often been ascribed to her. The half-fainting *Phèdre* of the first scene becomes, in the second act, a resourceful and voluptuous intriguer, still not convinced of her failure, and Gide requires her to generate an amount of heat which can only be plausible, as he prudently remarks, where Hippolyte's beauty of person is itself sufficiently evident. The purity of Hippolyte's love for Aricie should in its turn set off the impure passion of *Phèdre* for Hippolyte. 'And how timid,

prudish and in a small way *human*,' remarks Gide, 'will the first appear beside the Panic grandeur of the second!' And so, to the end, Gide pursues the argument that the tragedy of *Phèdre*, like the personality of Goethe, is one of the great impieties of our race—the gestures of indifference to Christian law. 'No doubt Racine is pious; but his gift as a tragedian is impious; and that is perhaps the chief reason for the silence which immediately follows *Phèdre*'.

Gide's translation of *Hamlet* is also, in its way, a memorable interpretation. In May 1942 the insistence of Barrault persuaded him to resume a task to which, in the summer of 1922, he had devoted many harassing and unsatisfactory sessions. The full *souffle* of Shakesperian verse cannot be reproduced in French. The two languages are not evenly matched; and everything which Gide then wrote about *Hamlet* could be repeated now by aspiring translators of Gide. 'It's not my job here to write well. . . . It's against that that I must struggle most.' The most sedulous of translators will sooner or later impose upon his original a spurious brilliance or suavity, a smoothness which, while it reads well in his own language, does no justice to the practised and savoury violence of the original. 'To write good French, one must go too far away from Shakespeare.' The translation of *Hamlet* represents a sustained effort of fidelity and intelligence such as few of our senior authors would pay to any French text. It is not Shakespeare, not Gide. The original has a variety of tone and attack, and with these a purely verbal resource, such as no other writer in any other language has ever possessed. Gide is himself a master of grammatical *tour de force*, but there are things which cannot be done. When, for example, Hamlet says

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ,

the lines simply are not rendered by 'Car le crime, sans recourir à des paroles, s'exprime avec une merveilleuse éloquence'. Nor does 'ce spectacle sera le traquenard où prendre le conscience du roi' reproduce one of the most sinister jingles ever spoken on a stage. But though this *Hamlet* must in some ways be accounted a curiosity, it will remain, like Gerard de Nerval's *Faust*, *Part I*, of great value to students of language; and it gave rise to a remarkable stage performance.

Gide has never lacked critics, and of these Julien Benda, spitting fire and revenge from his hermitage at Carcassonne, is the liveliest to read. *La France Byzantine* is a superlatively malicious work; readers accustomed to the dozing urbanity of English criticism may even be startled by Benda's free employment of his fangs, for these, though elderly, are still undrawn. Long use has concentrated their venom, and the apes of Gide, though rarely Gide himself, are badly mauled in the course of the book. Because it is easy to accept Mallarmé, Valéry and Gide as great masters, without paying them the tribute of close attention, Benda has done us all good service. His argument, put briefly, is that readers too readily adopt an idolatrous attitude to literature; in collusion with their most admired writers they applaud an art which, being founded upon unintelligible verbal subtleties, can lead only to the extinction of true literature. 'Alexandrian' is his favourite name for these writers, and he takes Mallarmé's frugal chantry in the rue de Rome to have been the original seat of the cult. A comparable decline led, in Latin times, from the male perfection of Tacitus and Cæsar and the philosophical grandeur of Lucretius to the imbecile niceties of Parthenios of Nicea. Assuming the mantle of St. Jerome, Benda deplores that, now as in Roman times, obscure gallantries and overtures to sensibility find more readers than the *Phaedo* or the *Timaeus*. He adds a reference to the time when, immediately after the Macedonian conquest, Athenian fashionables turned from Euripides and Thucydides, and from Aristotle and Demosthenes, to cool their delicate palates with Callimachus and his peers.

Within this general indictment, individual offenders are arraigned. Valéry's intellectualism is found to infect feeble-minded readers with the view that all conventional intellectual processes are futile. Similarly Gide's readers regard his own pointful hesitations as a permanently desirable state, rather than (as in Descartes) a position of doubt which a wise man will adopt in order to site himself for some new leap. Benda likens the false admirer of Gide to a eunuch in the harem of ideas; aimlessly he paws one after another of his charges, but cannot possess and fecundate any one of them. Most hot and bitter, too, is his assault upon the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. This magazine, perhaps the most brilliant and various in literary history, enjoyed between the years 1910-40 the services of every good writer in France—Benda himself not

least among them. Yet he finds in it mainly the clan spirit, a determination to dispense final and exclusive judgements, a general smugness and self-sufficiency, and in questions of language an affected difficulty of manner.

To all this Gide has replied, perhaps involuntarily, in a lecture which, though written for delivery in the Roxy Cinema at Beirut, has a more than Levantine importance. 'Souvenirs Littéraires et Problèmes Actuels' is, as its title would suggest, at once a fragment of reminiscence, in the palatial style of 'Si Le Grain Ne Meurt', and a series of those apostrophes to young listeners which make Gide, now as always, an incomparable, if at times baffling, invigorant. Benda receives (and with what melodious courtesy) his answer in the homage to Mallarmé, who raised 'notre vers classique à un degré de perfection sonore, de beauté plastique et intérieure, de puissance incantatrice qu'il n'avait jamais atteint encore et, je pense, n'atteindra jamais plus'. As for their indifference to anything but subtleties of language—the friends of Mallarmé included three of Dreyfus's most valorous defenders, and at no time did Mallarmé advocate the policy of *la littérature engagée*, which, cradled by Barrès, has now reached squawling maturity in the pages of *Les Temps Modernes*. The portrait of Barrès which follows is of a Benda-like mischief; and when Gide records how, while visiting Barrès, he stretched out his hand to take down a volume of Byron, only to find that the set was a false one, and masked a drawer full of brushes and scents, one might be back in the pages of the *Goncourt Journal*. As for the N.R.F., Gide points out that this, so far from being the playground of a self-intoxicated clique, was in fact open to the most varied points of view, and was, if anything, too severe to its own members. In it, one could watch the eternal dialogue of French thought—between the spirit of submission to received authority and that of doubt and the free examination of beliefs.

This short lecture, 'Souvenirs Littéraires et Problèmes Actuels', would tell casual readers quite a lot about Gide—the good fortune which placed him, from early youth onwards, among writers of extreme and irrecoverable brilliance; the *état de dialogue*, so natural to himself, which he sees to have been the essential form of French intelligence since Abelard first disputed with the Church; and his devotion to the idea of style, which alone, in his view, has preserved and ennobled even such writers as Bossuet,

who regarded it as their most profane, most perishable quality. If they were not habitual readers of French, they might be surprised at the heat and permanence of French literary disputes. (Beside these, our own controversies are like the summer games of unformed boys.) They might also infer that Gide has always regarded it as the writer's duty to be helpful to his readers. His direct interest in social problems is by no means recent; even as a spellbound tourist in North Africa he took notice of such things, and the problem of Franco-German relations is perhaps the oldest of his non-literary preoccupations. Nevertheless, the journey to the Congo, and his brief conversion to Communism, did represent a more serious complication, and one to which his years of silence (in the early 1930s) bear best witness. If he had come earlier to the social question (so he tells us in his *Journal 1939-1942*), the whole of his career would have been altered. To all this, the short *nouvelle Thésée* is the oblique answer.

*Thésée* is nearest, in form, to *Le Retour de L'Enfant Prodigue*, and nearest in substance to *Le Prométhée Mal Enchaîné*. As so often with Gide, the subject had lain in his mind for quite thirty years before he pushed himself to the point of beginning. Once begun, it took on a panoramic aspect, as if Gide were out to display every resource of art and language, and to rediscover his own spiritual history in the story of Theseus, the founder of Athens. *Thésée* is, first of all, a grammatical *tour de force*. Rare or obsolete usages are jammed close to phrases from vulgar contemporary speech. Poetic limpidities disclose, if one gazes long enough, the bluntest of improper suggestions. Puns and allegories lie one within the other. Theseus himself swings from metaphysical speculation to the language of a stable-boy, and is by turns elder statesman, nature-poet, and self-infatuated gymnast. An English reader, hot from thumbing his dictionary, may realize only after some time that this book is also a masterpiece of straight narrative. Not merely does every word take on its fullest load, but the placing of each word, the devices of rhythm and syntax, represent the searches and researches of a lifetime. In the *Figaro*, Gide has applied himself to minute points of language which might seem too childish for so great a writer; but on the contrary the scrutiny of such points has made possible the language of *Thésée*.

The first pages of the book describe the boyhood of Theseus, the first trials of his manhood, and the earlier of his summary but

appreciative sexual experiments. Once ashore at Crete, however, Gide launches out upon a full-scale evocation of antique grandeur. Flaubert and Sir Arthur Evans have had some hand in this, but the essentials of tone and pace, the golden sensuality and the pondered detail, are Gide's alone. These pages give off, no less than the Labyrinth itself, a voluptuous gas. They would be hard to equal for sensuous enjoyment. The complaisance of Ariadne gives place to the constructive intelligence of Daedalus, builder of the Labyrinth, and the philosophical illusions of his son Icarus, whose mind has been unsteadied for ever by the delights of the maze. For this is an ordeal of pleasure, not of endurance. Daedalus has built a maze more beguiling than life itself, and the Minotaur, so far from being a man-eating monster, is a flower-struck beauty, lulled into hebetude by the delights of his surroundings. We find him asleep among jonquils—an echo perhaps of the Sudanese negroes whom Gide had watched, long ago in Tunis, stuffing flowers into their nostrils. After an equivocal combat, Theseus with difficulty retrieves the rest of his party from the Labyrinth. The abduction of Phèdre leads to the passages which may lie nearest to Gide's heart. Theseus sets himself to found a great city, governed by an aristocracy not of birth, but of intellect. The book ends with Theseus an old and lonely man, secure in his glory, reflecting upon the memory of a talk with Oedipus. These last pages resume the dialogue between Christian and non-Christian laws which has always been, for Gide, at once brake and accelerator.

*Thésée*, then, is nearly everything—a 'good story', a prose-poem, a series of philosophical dialogues, an allegory, and an unblemished feat of language. No work of Gide's has been felt more deeply by its author, and an attentive reader will descry in it many other preoccupations than that of composing a work of literary art. Wraith-like, other heroes of Gide's, and sometimes Gide himself, compose some part of this Theseus. When Theseus says, 'Je n'ai jamais aimé la demeure, fût-ce au sein des délices', it is possible (while admiring the recondite usage of 'la demeure') to recall that Gide has written of his old friend Valéry that, 'Fût-ce dans les délices, il ne lui plaisait pas de s'attarder'. And Valéry has always been, for Gide, the symbol of an ideal, undistractable vigour; for no one, more than Gide, has sought for what Valéry himself described as 'une vie de volonté intellectuelle,

et ma résistance personnelle aux actions de dissipation, d'abrutissement, d'amollissement et d'insenséisme exercées sur le moderne par la vie qu'il faut mener, par l'université, par le journal, les modes, le chiqué, les extrémistes, les opportunistes, les clergés, les artistes, et généralement par tous ceux qui font croire et par ceux qui croient'. The grand individualism of this sentence is a prime trait, with Theseus and also with Gide. When, again, Theseus dedicates himself to the salvation of Athens, and forswears private enjoyments, he remarks that 'il ne s'agissait plus de conquérir, mais de régner'. One cannot but remember the lines from *Titus*, which Gide quoted in 1941 in order to show that sometimes in Racine there were instances of heroic decisions in which higher interests overruled the claims of love. Theseus here echoes *Titus*:

Je sens bien que sans vous je ne saurais plus vivre.  
Mais il ne s'agit plus de vivre, il faut régner.

Olympian Goethe takes his place, beside Valéry and beside Racine's *Titus*, on the committee. In politics, Theseus pursues a modified Stalinism; in the life of the senses, he has the uninhibited power of enjoyment which Gide has tried to transplant from the Tunis of 1895 into the western Europe of our own epoch. In religion and personal morality he derives from the Goethe of Gide's preface. Even his motto, 'Passer Outre', which clangs like a bell-buoy throughout the story, is attributed also to Goethe. Theseus, as much as Goethe, valued love as a liberating force; and, like him, knew when to have done with it. 'Après . . . avoir tiré d'un bonheur tout le parti qui convenait à l'art, Goethe ne s'y attardait pas, mais passait outre; il ne gardait l'amour au cœur qu'aussi longtemps qu'il en avait besoin pour son œuvre.' Theseus's dialogue with Oedipus, again, puts explicitly the conflicts which Gide for sixty years has sometimes nourished; sometimes endured; but when Theseus has the last word, and rejects absolutely the mystical point of view, one cannot but feel behind him the outline of a later illuminant. As Gide wrote a year or so earlier, 'Goethe . . . n'attaque pas le christianisme, comme avait fait Voltaire ou Diderot, comme fera Nietzsche; simplement il passe outre; ou plutôt: il passe à côté. De péché originel, de contrition, de rédemption, il n'a cure'. One could multiply such examples, for *Thésée* represents, on Gide's part, an act of confidence; Gide's

life, as much as Theseus's, is recounted in its pages—from the radiant sensuality of the beginning to the long-pondered meliorism of the last few lines. No palpable city bears witness to Gide's long effort; but he has passed on to some of us his conviction that man has not yet spoken his last word, and that 'l'humanité', in Theseus's phrase, 'peut plus et vaut mieux'. In the last few years he has gathered up the ends of a lifetime of work; his language has taken on a definitive grandeur; and it is only just to acclaim him, as he has acclaimed Goethe, as 'le plus bel exemple, à la fois souriant et grave, de ce que, sans aucun secours de la Grâce, l'homme, de lui-même, peut obtenir'.

#### SHORT BOOK LIST

The following are the principal publications of André Gide since 1939:

- Thésée* (Gallimard).
- Journal 1939-1942* (Gallimard).
- Attendu Que. . . .* (Charlot).
- Jeunesse (Ides et Calendes)*: Neuchâtel).
- Le Retour (Ides et Calendes)*: Neuchâtel).
- Souvenirs Littéraires et Problèmes Actuels* (Les Lettres Françaises).
- Feuilllets* (Charlot).
- Poussin* (Le Divan).
- En Découvrant Henri Michaux* (Gallimard).
- Paul Valéry* (Domat).
- Hamlet* (Gallimard).

The style of *Thésée* is the subject of a remarkable article by Etiemble in *Les Temps Modernes* (March 1947); and Gide's use of language is analysed with all possible authority by 'M. St. Clair' in her book of portraits, *Galerie Privée* (Gallimard). *André Gide*, by Jean Hytier (Charlot) should also be consulted.

*Poussin* has been translated by Dorothy Bussy for publication in *The Arts*.

Messrs. Secker & Warburg have in hand an English translation of Gide's *Journal 1889-1939*.

IAN FLEMING

# WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?

## XIII—JAMAICA

MY DEAR JOHN,

You are one of the million or more English citizens who intend to seek fortune and freedom abroad and I would like to encourage you because I don't believe we can go on borrowing money indefinitely to feed forty-eight million people. But I know you are vacillating between various corners of the world which have these essential virtues: English-speaking, sterling area, good weather, food, friends and 'freedom' (whatever you mean by that). I also know from your letters that although you have considered many refuges which have these blessings, you are alarmed by the social ambience of all of them.

On the one hand you are appalled by the tea-and-tennis set atmosphere in many of the most blessed corners of our Empire. You smell boiled shirts, cucumber sandwiches and the L-shaped life of expatriate Kensingtonia. At the other extreme you fear the moral '*dégringolade*' of the tropics, the slow disintegration of Simenon's '*Touriste de Bananes*'. In your imagination you hear the hypnotic whisper of the palm trees stooping too gracefully over that blue lagoon. You feel the scruffy stubble sprouting on your chin. The cracked mirror behind Red's Bar reflects the bloodhound gloom of those ruined features which contort painfully as you cough into a soiled handkerchief. You know you'll be dead before the next monsoon.

So it is in your mind's eye, and so it might easily be if you plumped for tropic sloth and had not the leather morale of a Scottish missionary.

But a middle way between the lethe of the tropics and a life of fork-lunches with the District Commissioner's wife can be achieved and I believe you will achieve it in Jamaica. In a desultory fashion I have examined a large part of the world—most of Europe, some of Canada and Australia, bits of Africa and a few islands, including Hawaii, Capri, Cyprus, Malta and Ceylon. America, including San Francisco and Florida. Even two short periods of work in Moscow (like the Gorbals but much

larger and much, much duller when you've finished sightseeing). After looking at all these, I spent four days in Jamaica in July 1943. July is the beginning of the hot season and it rained in rods every day at noon, yet I swore that if I survived the contest I would go back to Jamaica, buy a piece of land, build a house and live in it as much as my job would allow. I went back in January '46, chose a site, designed a house, chose an agent and an architect and by last December all was finished. This year I had five weeks' holiday in the new house and I wish it could have been six months.

I live on the North Shore, opposite an invisible Cuba, on the eastern corner of a tiny banana port called Oracabessa (Golden Head). My neighbours, both coloured and white, are charming and varied. I have no regrets.

Jamaica, one of our oldest colonies and the most valuable of our British West Indian islands, is slightly smaller than Northern Ireland. It contains 1,250,000 souls, ten per cent of whom live in Kingston, the capital. At a *very* rough guess, I should say that there are 50,000 white inhabitants or constant visitors, and another 100,000 who would seem white to you or me. No more statistics. You can find them all in the Encyclopædia, Whitaker, the Handbook of Jamaica or the Handbook of the West Indies. One of these will be in your public library. From your subscription library, you can borrow any amount of travel books and novels about Jamaica (*High Wind in Jamaica* is mostly about Cuba), and you will note extensive literary associations with 'Monk' Lewis, Beckford of Fonthill and Smollett. You may also care to explore accounts of the Trial of Governor Eyre, for the Jamaica Committee for his prosecution included John Stuart Mill as chairman, with Huxley, Thomas Hughes and Herbert Spencer as members. Carlyle was chairman of the committee of defence with Ruskin and Tennyson in support.

Cyril Connolly spent part of his 'blue' or post-graduate period here and Augustus John is amongst its many portrayers.

An atlas will show you that the island looks very like a swimming turtle—side view—with a range of mountainous hills stretching along its middle from its tail to its eye. At its tail, where also Kingston the capital lies, is a real mountain, the Blue Mountain, 7,000 feet high, which grows the finest coffee in the world (with the same name). You will drink this coffee

cold-distilled. That is, the coffee, freshly ground, is percolated over and over again with cold water until a thin black treacle is produced. This is very strong and contains all the aroma which, by roasting, would otherwise be lost on the kitchen air. A third of a cup with hot milk or water added will spoil you for all of the more or less tortured brews you drink in England.

The Blue Mountain precipitates a good deal of rain at the Eastern end of the island and this end is therefore wetter and perhaps even more fruitful than the rest; but the spine of mountainous country which runs the length of the island has the same beneficial effect and gives Jamaican weather a variety which is stimulating and extremely healthy. (I can assure you that sun and calm blue seas and brassy heat can be more wearying and exasperating than the grey but ever-changing porridge in which you live and make sour moan.)

Another pleasant peculiarity of the weather, which has some simple but immaterial cause, is that at nine o'clock on most mornings throughout the year the 'Doctor's Wind' blows lightly in from the sea until, at six in the evening, the 'Undertaker's Wind' comes on regular duty and blows, from the centre of the island, the stale air out again. (Your room, or your house, should face so as to take advantage of this benefice.) On most nights of the year you can sleep with a light blanket if your room is fortunately placed on the island, but it will be clear to you that one cannot generalize about the weather or the temperature on an island with mountains all along its spine. This also applies to the humidity which, in the hot season, can be considerable at some corners and some levels, but unimportant at others. You must just find these things out for yourself and not listen to generalities.

As you can imagine, the landscape varies with the altitude. In parts the uplands, with their stone-walled meadows and Friesian cattle, remind one of Ireland or the Tyrol—except for the orchids and the backdrop of tropical trees and the occasional green lightning of parrakeets or Bengal flame of a giant Immortel. Then you drop down, often through a cathedral of bamboo or a deep-cut gully of ferns, into a belt of straight tropical vegetation —palms, cotton trees and Jamaican hardwoods such as ebony, mahogany, mahoe, red bullet and the like. Amongst them grow thick the tribe of logwood, and dogwood. Indigo comes from

logwood and the bees make particular honey from its yellow blossom. (There is another variety of dogwood called 'Bitch-wood', but this is politely referred to as 'Mrs. Dogwood'. I will tell you more of this likeable Jamaican *pudeur* later on.)

You will pass through meadows of sensitive plant (local name 'Shamelady') and pick some of the 2,000 different varieties of flowers. There are innumerable butterflies and humming-birds and, at night, fireflies of many kinds. In the distance, the sea will be breaking in silver on the reef and, because of the phosphorus, you will look like an Oscar if you bathe in some of the bays after dark.

The lowlands, and the valleys which comb the flanks of the hills, are all sugar cane, citrus, cultivated palms and bananas and various fruit-vegetables like mangoes, bread-fruit, guavas, sour-sop, naseberries and the like. The cattle here will be mostly sleek Indian herds, imported (and now thriving), because of their tick-resistance. Another import you will see every day is the mongoose, brought in to kill the snakes. He has killed them all and has long since started on birds' eggs with disastrous consequences to all who build their nests in banks and near the ground. The only bird you will see too many of is the carrion crow, protected because he scavenges impeccably and with hideous magic the dead dog in the forest and the fish spines in your 'yard'.

The coastline is very varied. Coral rocks and cliffs alternate with 'South Sea island' coves and bays and beaches. The sand varies too, from pure white to golden to brown to grey. The sea is blue and green and rarely calm and still. A coral reef runs round the island with very deep water beyond and over the reef hang frigate birds, white or black, with beautifully forked tails, and dark blue kingfishers. Clumsy pelicans and white or slate grey egrets fish at the river mouths. There is every kind of tropical fish from big game to breakfast. The latter are caught in seines or boxnets. All varieties of shellfish, of course, and beautiful sea-shells from conches to cowries (better on the South coast beaches like Negril and Black River). Black crabs are a great delicacy and are eaten highly spiced. Every now and then they march inland in herds (cf. lemmings in reverse) and if your house is in the way they march through it or over it and if your body in your bed is in the way, they march over that too, and your face.

On your drives (New Standard, drive-yourself, costs about £10 a week) you will come upon many of the famous Jamaican 'great houses', particularly if you leave the excellent main highways and venture along the quite viable parochial roads. Such are Cardiff Hall, just sold by the Blagrove family after unbroken tenure since Cromwell gave it to an ancestor; Bellevue Plantation belonging to the Bryces; Harmony Hall in its fine palm-grove; Prospect, belonging to Sir Harold Mitchell; the ruins of Rose Hall (read the *White Witch of Rose Hall*, by De Lisser, hot-blooded sadism and slaves set in the 1850s) and many others.

A curious part of the island is the Cockpit Country 'known', the map says, 'by the name of Look Behind'. When taxes were introduced (1790) the Maroons, the Spanish negro inhabitants of this province, would not pay. The Governor sent a company of redcoats up into their hills to enforce payment, but the Maroons repulsed them, set up their own government and refused allegiance to the Crown. They still refuse it, and are the only corner of the British Empire to do so. Their 'colonel' is a coloured man who with all his 'government', wears a Sam Browne belt as a badge of office. He does very little governing except to maintain the rights of his people *vis-à-vis* the Governor. His people work and mix with their neighbours, intermarry and go and come as they please. But, since they pay no taxes, no roads have ever been built in the province and there are no public facilities such as post offices and social services. The terrain has never been surveyed and, if you look at the map, you will see a large white patch with the red veins of the roads coming to a full stop at its perimeter. There is nothing more to it than that, and the inhabitants are quite uninteresting, but it's pleasant to live in a Colony where a touch of zany persists.

A most remarkable feature of Jamaica is the abundance of mineral springs and baths. Some of these are already modestly developed and commercialized but only to the extent of some fifty bedrooms at the two main spas—Bath and Milk River (there will be 500 in twenty years). Milk River has the highest radio-activity of any mineral bath in the world—nine times as active as Bath, England, fifty times as active as Vichy, three times as active as Karlsbad and fifty-four times as active as Baden in Switzerland. While you are curing your rheumatism or sciatica (or just having an aphrodisiac binge) you can fish for tarpon or

shoot yourself a crocodile suitcase, all at fourteen shillings a day (crocodile one pound extra).

As an amateur speleologist you will like the caverns and sink-holes which abound in the limestone hills. Up to a mile long, few of these have been explored and many are doubtless stuffed with pirate treasure including Sir Henry Morgan's hoard and the saving accounts of rich visitors from Columbus onwards.

The local music is Calypso, not as inventive as the original Trinidad varieties, but with the same electric rhythms. You can hire a good trio for upward of ten shillings an evening and they will play happily (happier with some rum) until the small hours. There are cheerfully unprintable versions of most of the songs, but you won't notice the words unless you master the Welsh intonation of the Jamaican voice and the occasional colloquialisms.

Bad or indecent language is almost absent from the native vocabulary. Thief, liar, badman are about the strongest words you will hear and these will mean real hate or rage. 'Will you do me a rudeness?' means 'will you sleep with me?', to which a brazen girl will reply 'you better hang on grass, I goin' move so much'.

Despite your visit to the Milk River, you would be very ill-advised to try any 'rudeness' with the local beauties. It would be unpopular with both coloured people and whites. For other reasons I would advise you to give a miss to the stews of Kingston although they would provide you with every known amorous constellation and permutation. One of the reasons why our Atlantic Squadron is based on Bermuda instead of Kingston (the Americans wanted us to contribute to the defence of Panama) was the veto of our naval health and welfare authorities. Kingston is a tough town—tough and dirty—despite all the exhortations of *The Daily Gleaner* (my favourite newspaper above all others in the world) and the exertions of the quite admirable Jamaican police force.

Apart from the shortcomings of Kingston, the only serious drawbacks to the island are the mosquitoes, sandflies, grass-ticks and politics. None of these are virulent hazards. Mosquitoes will only be met near swamplands and rivers, where they will force you to use netting and DDT. Sandflies are quite damnable on some beaches. They are tiny midges which bite hard and I can only advise you to use Milton on the bites and avoid some beaches.

Grass-ticks will fasten on to bare skin if you walk thoughtlessly in cattle country. They will cause you intense grief. It is most unlikely that you will try much cross-country walking owing to the nature of the country and the heat. If you do, wear high boots or tuck your trousers into your socks.

Politics? Well, it's the usual picture—education bringing a desire for self-government, for riches, for blacker coats and whiter collars, for a greater share (or all) of the prizes which England gets from the colony, for motor-cars, race-horses (a Jamaican passion), tennis clubs and tea parties and all the other desirable claptrap of the whites. Two men are fighting each other to take over the chaperonage of Jamaica. Bustamante (a gorgeous flamboyant rabble-rouser, idol of the labour unions) and Manley, K.C. (the local Cripps and white hope of the Harlem communists. Brilliant and perhaps wise, he controls the black coats and white collars and has the right wife to help him. Between them they are the intellectual focus of the island.) You would like both of these citizens although they would both say that they want to kick you out. Neither has an able deputy and it is impossible to say who will succeed to and perhaps fuse this forked leadership. Holding wise and successful sway is the Governor, Sir John Huggins, with an admirable Colonial Secretary, H. M. Foot, brother of Michael and the rest of that remarkable brood. Lady Huggins, 'Molly' to the whole population, is a blonde and much-loved bombshell who wins tennis and golf tournaments and wrestles with the Colonial Office about the rights and concerns of all the women of Jamaica. Heaven knows what the island will do without her.

I do not believe that you will find Island politics a grave danger in the future or that you will get your throat cut in the night as some Jamaican penkeepers (landlords) will have you believe. I expect that Jamaica should slip fairly quietly into a Caribbean Federation (perhaps with Dominion status) and that the liberality and wisdom of our present policy will take the edge off passions which were high some years ago. There will always be a racial simmering and occasional clashes between coloured and white vanities, but personally I rely on liking my neighbours at Oracabessa, on a dog called Himmler and on a Spanish tomb in my garden which is full of 'duppies' (local ghosts).

Well, those are the hazards of Jamaica and I think you will

agree that they compare quite favourably with the more civilized risks—spivs, road-death, flu and vitamin deficiency—which infest your English life. (I have cancelled out Russians and atom bombs against the Jamaican hurricanes which may, in the autumn, blow you over and your roof off at about five-yearly intervals.)

Food is delicious and limitless, but the cooking uninspired and ‘english’ unless you fight against it. Unbounded drink of all sorts (rum at six shillings a bottle up, Dutch liqueurs from Curaçao, French wines from Martinique and Guadeloupe, gins and whiskeys from England) and infinite cigars rolled in Havana or Jamaica thighs. New motor cars from England, America and France, and excellent textiles from Britain. (Good tailors and seamstresses will make you anything in one day to three, but best give them a model to copy.) There are no permits or coupons and prices are reasonable (cheap outside Kingston or Montego Bay). Servants are plentiful but varied and are twelve to twenty shillings a week. They require exhortation and a sense of humour, which the majority appreciate. Hired labour will cost you three shillings a day (female) and four shillings a day (male) and furniture-makers are many and good. All labour requires exact instructions, constant reminders and an absolute veto on making things look ‘pretty’ (food, furniture, gardens, clothes). There is too much cruelty to animals, which are regarded as strictly expendable. Drivers tip their whips with heavy wire and attack the tender parts of their beasts with malignant and unerring precision. There is, of course, plenty of heavy drinking, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, after pay-day, and there is some smoking of Indian hemp, or Marihuana or ‘ganja’ as it is called locally. (If you are caught at this, or at cockfighting, you will get about twelve strokes of the Tamarind switch, which I fancy is more painful than it sounds.)

Local black magic (*obeah*) is scarce and dull but credited by most. It consists largely of brewing love potions and putting on hoodoos. If you find a white chicken with its head cut off lying on your doorstep you have, or should have, had it. But the Jamaicans are most law-abiding and God-fearing and have a strictness of behaviour and manners which will surprise and charm you. Don’t mistake me, these are no angels. The people go to law constantly over trivialities to give their neighbours

evidence of their social advancement and often for the simple fun of hiring a white man. They fervently adhere to one of the many religious denominations as you or I might join a club, and when they go to church it is to swing 'Rock of Ages' and go right to town with 'Come all ye Faithful'! (The Salvation Army plays their jazz straight.) Nevertheless and for whatever reasons, law and the church are a great counterweight to the human extravagance which the hot sun breeds. I think you will appreciate the fairly solid civic framework which contains this tropic luxury. It is just enough to raise in you that moral eyebrow which the heat might otherwise have drugged.

I have not talked about the intellectual and artistic life in Jamaica because I am not particularly intellectual or artistic and I might misinform you. Nor have I mentioned the sort of people you may meet and make friends with in the island for there is the whole gamut, from Lord Beaverbrook to a glorified beach-comber with a fixation on swans.

Now, John, while I strongly advise you and your friends to come here for a holiday I cannot urge you to immigrate because I haven't done so myself and I really don't know how you would all stand up to it, what you would do when you got here, or what all your standards of living are. Jamaica is a small world with few industries which can afford learners. If you are all competent in your trades and professions (outside the middleman professions) you should be able to find a niche, but you must have enough money to live on while you look round and enough for your return passage if you don't succeed or don't like it. Remember that unless you are exceptional, you will be competing with coloured people in the lower ranks of all the jobs, and you will find this difficult and perhaps exasperating. If you are thoroughly competent, with really solid references, you may find a short cut through friends, or friends of friends. But, to begin with, work will be very hard and earnings small. Later, I guess you should do well since I am sure many new industries will come to Jamaica and much foreign capital and, if you are on the spot, you may get into one of the new enterprises. But don't forget, nearly all offices are in Kingston and I am not at all sure how you would like living there.

If you have your own resources, both material and spiritual, I think you could live a happy and modest life on £500 to £1,000

a year, with a house, servants and all the rest. It will cost you about two to three thousand to build a house. The land will be about ten to a hundred pounds an acre, depending on situation. You *must* have a good water supply and a clear title. Rents vary all over the island. Income Tax is much the same as in England, but I fancy rather easier on the lower brackets.

If you come for a holiday, come between November and June. The other four months are hot and rainy. You can fly direct by British South American Airways in two days (£130, single). If you are very lucky you can travel in a banana boat, which is the cheapest way. The easiest in these days would be to get across the Atlantic by ship or plane and then fly down via Miami (three hours to Jamaica). Order your rooms in advance through a travel agency, but take a chance if they say 'full up'. You can send any amount of money to Jamaica by ringing up your bank and telling them to do it.

'Well, that's enough, John. I can't think of anything else and if you want to know any more you must read some books or write to the Jamaica Hotels Association, Kingston, or one of the other addresses you will find in the Handbook of Jamaica. You could also get in touch, but very politely, because they are not a travel agency, with the West India Committee, Norfolk Street, London.

Come soon and bring Ann and the children. The schools are excellent and the new West Indian University is just going up. I will give you a feast. The menu will be; Booby's Eggs, Black Crab, Roast Stuffed Sucking Pig with Rice and Peas, Guavas in Syrup with Cream, Blue Mountain Coffee, Yellow Chartreuse (pre-war). Pork-Chop's trio will play 'Gimme a shilling with a Lion upon it', 'Linstead Market', 'Iron Bar' and 'Saturday Night' and we will watch the fireflies and listen to the distant surf on the reef.

Tell the others,

IAN.

C. M. BOWRA

# AN ITALIAN POET: SALVATORE QUASIMODO

*Giorno dopo Giorno*, di Salvatore Quasimodo, con una introduzione di Carlo Bo. Mondadori. pp. 63. 1947.

IT must be admitted that the Italian contribution to poetry in the twentieth century has not hitherto been very distinguished. Though Italy has produced abundant and notable poetry since the beginning of the thirteenth century, in the last forty years it has looked as if the springs of creation were running dry. Instead of setting an example to Europe, Italian poets have tended to imitate French models and to be content with a provincial obscurity. It is true that at the beginning of the century the ebullient genius of d'Annunzio still flowed unwithstood, but his best work was finished by 1914, and since then his example has caused more harm than benefit. Poets have been forced to flee from it, but they have found this difficult, and the result has too often been precious and petty. It is also true that some poets have found a truly original voice, like Eugenio Montale, who has applied modern methods of image and symbol to a subtle vision of personal experience. But a general sense of direction has been lacking. Italian poetry has seemed to flounder in the opposing currents of European experiment and not known what to do. No doubt Fascism was largely responsible for this. Poets seldom flourish under tyrannies, and Italy has been no exception to the rule. In a society where individual enterprise is discouraged and originality suspected, the poet is heavily handicapped. The disappearance of Mussolini raised hopes that Italian poetry would recover, and we can now see that these hopes were not foolish and have already begun to be realized.

In the last four or five years a group of younger Italian poets have published books which show a new manner and a new outlook. Names which were unknown before the war, Leonardo Sinigalli, Vincenzo Cardarelli, Libero de Libero, and Salvatore Quasimodo, have sprung into prominence, and it is clear that something important is happening. The literary antecedents of these poets can be traced. They all owe something to the

encouragement and example of Giuseppe Ungaretti, who in his careful and discriminating art has tried to eliminate all traces of romantic rhetoric and to reduce experience to a few telling words. No less influential is Umberto Saba, who with much subtlety and sensibility has created a tranquil poetry of two subjects on which Italians are well qualified to speak: family life and the countryside. There can be no doubt that the new poets owe something to these two men and have learned from them the virtues of sincerity and brevity and the striking image. But they have something else which is not so prominent in their masters, a sense of urgency and responsibility in a troubled world and a desire to make their poetry reflect the fundamental issues of contemporary life.

Of these new poets Salvatore Quasimodo is perhaps the most original and most accomplished. His new volume, *Giorno dopo Giorno* (*Day After Day*), contains only twenty short poems, but each has its own perfection and haunting appeal. All seem to have been written between 1943 and 1945, at a time when the destiny of Italy was tragically obscure. Defeated in war for a cause in which she did not believe, she had become a battlefield for foreign armies, and no one knew what disaster would not befall his town or his family. Quasimodo's poetry was born in these years of agony and reflects his attempt to master circumstances by understanding them in their full significance for the imagination as well as for the intellect. How difficult his task has been is shown in the opening lines of his first poem:

E come potevamo noi cantare  
con il piede straniero sopra il cuore,  
fra i morti abbandonati nelle piazze  
sull'erba dura di ghiaccio, al lamento  
d'agnello dei fanciulli, all'urlo nero  
della madre che andava incontro al figlio  
crocifisso sul palo del telegrafo?

And how could we sing  
With the stranger's foot upon the heart,  
Among the dead abandoned on the squares  
On the grass hard with ice, to the lamb's  
Lament of the children, to the black shriek  
Of the mother who came upon her son  
Crucified on the telegraph-pole?

But just because he has had to struggle for expression, Quasimodo has found a peculiar distinction of utterance. His poetry is of a terrible ordeal in which he tests the worth of his old convictions against the acid times. He turns to what seem to be the most established things in his life, to love, to domestic affections, to the past, to nature, and asks how much each is worth now.

In this poetry it is perhaps possible to discern some indebtedness to Leopardi. Quasimodo uses a free kind of blank verse, which is not unlike what Leopardi used in his earlier poems. He is extremely direct and concentrated and clear, and his imagery, chosen with much insight, shows exactly what he means. He has, too, Leopardi's gift for expressing a powerful emotion in a few extremely telling words. But the resemblance is in no sense due to imitation. Quasimodo speaks with his own voice, the voice of a contemporary man who is determined to be absolutely sincere and to shirk no truth, however painful. He has none of the rhetoric so dear to the Italian heart, and he never tries to make a situation more significant than it is. The result is that, though some of his subjects may be in themselves not very important, he succeeds in giving to them the significance of serious and even of tragic occasions. At a time when poetry finds it difficult to adjust itself to the poignant call of circumstances, Quasimodo has created an instrument which answers most needs. He is both subtle and profound, both highly personal and the voice of millions, both Italian and European. His experience is familiar to most men and women, and he has made it more real for them by his personal vision of it.

The secret of this art is its absolute sincerity and the force with which it is presented. When Quasimodo makes a plain statement, it is not only chosen for its pertinence to his mood but expressed with an unfailing eye for its essential qualities. So in writing of Milan in 1943, he gives the terrible sense of death and desolation in words which seem to be quite unadorned and yet have a truly tragic force:

Non scavate pozzi nei cortili :  
i vivi non hanno più sete.  
Non toccate i morti, così rossi, così gonfi :  
lasciateli nella terra delle loro case :  
la città è morta, è morta.

Do not dig wells in the courtyards:  
 The living are no longer thirsty.  
 Do not touch the dead, so red, so swollen:  
 Leave them on the floor of their houses:  
 The city is dead, is dead.

He conjures up the devastation of war in a single, small example, which needs no excuse or supplement:

Io ti ricordo quel geranio acceso  
 su un muro crivellato di mitraglia.

I recall to you that blazing geranium  
 On a wall sieved by a machine-gun.

When a more complex theme presents itself, he rises easily to it and loses nothing of his directness or intensity. His images are not far-fetched, but have a remarkable aptness and richness of association, as when he laments that his age has none of the consolations of heroism:

Alzeremo tombe in riva al mare, sui campi dilaniati,  
 ma non uno dei sarcofagi che segnano gli eroi.  
 Con noi la morte ha più volte giocato:  
 s'udiva nell' aria un battere monotono di foglie,  
 come nella brughiera se al vento di scirocco  
 la folaga palustre sale sulla nube.

We shall raise tombs on the sea-shore, on the mangled fields,  
 But not one of the sarcophaguses that mark heroes.  
 With us death has often jested;  
 We can hear in the air a monotonous beating of leaves,  
 As in the fog the marsh moor-hen rises  
 To the sirocco wind in the cloud.

Quasimodo has mastered the modern technique of exact and subtle expression, but he has purged it of its traps and ambiguities and created a poetry which makes an immediate appeal through its powerful imaginative sincerity.

Though Quasimodo is deeply distressed by the tragic events of these years, he does not write unrelieved laments. He has his own consolations to offer, his frail hopes and momentary joys. He does not attempt to delude himself about the present horror or the threat of dark prospects, but he begs that by some great break with the past, a better state of things will come, and this is the message of his closing poem, 'Uomo del mio Tempo' (Man of My Time) :

Sci ancora quello della pietra e della fionda;  
 uomo del mio tempo. Eri nella carlinga,  
 con le ali maligne, le meridiane di morte,  
 —t'ho visto—dentro il carro di fuoco, alle forche,  
 alle ruote di tortura. T'ho visto; eri tu,  
 con la tua scienza esatta persuasa allo sterminio,  
 senza amore, senza Cristo. Hai ucciso ancora,  
 come sempre, come uccisero i padri, come uccisero  
 gli animali che li videro per la prima volta.  
 E questo sangue odora come nel giorno  
 quando il fratello disse all'altro fratello:  
 'Andiamo ai campi.' E quell'eco fredda, tenace,  
 è giunta fino a te, dentro la tua giornata.  
 Dimenticate, o figli, le nuvole di sangue  
 salite dalla terra, dimenticate i padri:  
 le loro tombe affondano nella cenere,  
 gli uccelli neri, il vento, coprono il loro cuore.

You are still he of the stone and of the sling,  
 Man of my time. You were in the cockpit,  
 With the malignant wings, with the meridians of death,  
 —I have seen you—inside the wagon of flame, at the  
 pitch-forks,  
 At the wheel of torture. I have seen you; it was you,  
 With your exact science, persuaded to destruction,  
 Without love, without Christ. You have killed again,  
 As always, as your fathers killed, as they killed  
 The animals who saw them for the first time.

And the smell of this blood is as on the day  
When the brother said to the other brother :  
'Let us go to the fields.' And that echo, cold, clinging,  
Is fastened to you, within your day.  
O sons, forget the clouds of blood  
Risen from the earth, forget your fathers :  
Their tombs sink in the ashes,  
The black birds, the wind, cover their heart.

This poem shows Quasimodo's approach to his time. He does not attempt to excuse or to gloss its horrors, but he believes that man can break with his bloodthirsty past, and for the moment that suffices for him. The poem shows, too, the strength and the skill of his art. Each image makes its effect fully and finally; each sentence has its own rhythm which echoes a deep emotion. There is nothing superfluous or false, and the whole speaks not only for the poet but for all who resemble him in feeling powers of darkness at work in the world.

## TWENTY-ONE ANSWERS

THIS is an attempt on the part of HORIZON to bring a little order into the confusion of a year's publishing, and to recall to our readers in search of Christmas books the titles which are outstanding. Inquiries were sent out asking the recipients to tell us the names of the three books published in 1947 (if possible, not reprints) which they had read with the greatest interest and enjoyment. The replies are not to be taken as a vote of popularity but as an indication of which books some of our best critics have derived real satisfaction from, even if only because they are interested in a certain line of research. Foreign books were not permitted or Camus's *La Peste* would probably have topped the list. There is also a tendency to choose books which one has read in the last part of the year rather than the first, and one is also affected by time and place. Thus the imposing three-decker *Eustace and Hilda*, of Mr. Leslie Hartley, gains infinitely from being read on holiday or in a convalescence. Mr. Charles Morgan's *The Judge's Story* is exactly the right length for a three-hour air journey and becomes associated with the euphoria and anxiety of a sensitive traveller. These two books read in these conditions might easily dwarf those read six months before in the cold spell. The list was sent out before the November books had appeared. Among those too late to be mentioned (many being by HORIZON authors) are :

*The Classical Moment (Studies in Corneille, Molière and Racine)*, by Martin Turnell. Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.

*Gide's Journals*. Translated by Justin O'Brien. Secker & Warburg, 25s.

*Samuel Palmer*, by Geoffrey Grigson. Kegan Paul, £2 2s.

*A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Bawdy*, by Eric Partridge. Routledge, limited edition, £2 2s.

*Classical Landscape with Figures*, by Osbert Lancaster. John Murray, 15s.

*The Bloom of Candles (Poems)*, by Laurie Lee. John Lehmann, 3s. 6d.

*Do I Wake or Sleep*, by Isabel Bolton. Chapman & Hall, 7s. 6d.

*Comes the Reckoning*, by Bruce Lockhart. Putnam, 18s.

*Towards Mozambique (Poems)*, by Charles Hepburn. Cresset Press, 7s. 6d.

### LORD BERNERS

*A Study of Goethe*. Barker Fairley

*A Treatise on the Novel*. Robert Liddell

*Tea With Mrs. Goodman*. Philip Toynbee

### T. S. ELIOT

I do not get round to reading books so quickly as that. Apart from books published by Faber & Faber (which for me are *hors de concours* for the present investigation) the most interesting new books published in this country I have read in 1947 were published in 1946. They are: *The Apostolic Ministry*, K. E. Kirk and others, and *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, Mascall.

### AUGUSTUS JOHN

*Paideia (The ideal of Greek Culture)*. Werner Jaeger

*The March of Literature*. Ford Maddox Ford

*In Search of Two Characters*. Dormer Creston

### ROY HARROD

I am afraid that I have not read many books published in 1947. But I am sure that the following, which I have placed in alphabetical order, would compete for first place in a vintage year:

*Manservant and Maidservant*. I. Compton-Burnett

*Eustace and Hilda*. L. P. Hartley

*The Economic Problem in Peace and War*. L. Robbins

### L. P. HARTLEY

*War in Val d'Orcia*. Iris Origo

*Young Enthusiasts*. Elizabeth Jenkins

*The Rock Pool*. Cyril Connolly

## JOHN HAYWARD

Leaving aside reprints (e.g. *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, etc.), I cannot recollect three new books, published in England during 1947, which I have read with greater interest and enjoyment—with enjoyment because I did not have to read them as a professional duty—than:

*Innocents.* A. L. Barker

*The Scarlet Tree.* Sir Osbert Sitwell

*A Key to Finnegans Wake.* Campbell and Robinson

## ARTHUR KOESTLER

*The Real Soviet Russia.* David T. Dallin

(Should be reprinted as a Penguin as soon as possible.)

*Hypno-Analysis.* L. R. Wolberg

(A full-length case history, written by a hypno-analyst with the makings of an artist; relevant to the question of the future of the novel.)

*Tea with Mrs. Goodman.* Philip Toynbee

(It breaks the ice, or rather the polished parquet floor, of the contemporary English novel.)

## ROSAMOND LEHMANN

Titles of three books I have enjoyed in 1947:

*The Poetic Image.* C. Day Lewis

*George Eliot.* Gerald Bullett

*Arthur Rimbaud.* Enid Starkie

Fact is, I have read extremely little published this year apart from reprints. Have been reading mostly nineteenth-century French and English, and Henry James.

## JOHN LEHMANN

I plump for these three new books:

*The Poetic Image.* C. Day Lewis

*Agostino.* Alberto Moravia

*Letters from India.* Alun Lewis

## KINGSLEY MARTIN

*Autobiography.* Neville Cardus

*A Bear Caught at the North Pole.* Robert Payne

*Ciano's Diary*

Not the three books I've read with the greatest interest—can't remember—but here are three of the books I've found most enjoyable.

## RAYMOND MORTIMER

*The Thackeray Letters.* Vols. 3 and 4

*The Sword and the Chrysanthemum.* Ruth Benedict

*Eustace and Hilda.* L. P. Hartley

## HAROLD NICOLSON

It is difficult to find a good three as the best are reprints and the level low all through. My selection is:

*Portrait of Edith Wharton.* Percy Lubbock

*Revolt in the Backlands.* Euclides da Cunha

*Foreign Mud.* Maurice Collis

## GEORGE ORWELL

Writing this in bed—very unwell. Have read a lot this year but nothing of any value except old books, mostly in cheap reprints. I enjoyed especially, i.e. among books I had not read before:

*Under Western Eyes.* Joseph Conrad

*The Aspern Papers.* Henry James

*Framley Parsonage.* Anthony Trollope

No new English books of any value published in 1947, so far as I know. Quite willing to be convinced I am wrong in this, but shall need evidence.

## WILLIAM PLOMER

*The Shadow of Cain.* Edith Sitwell

*War in Val d'Orcia.* Iris Origo

*Worlds Apart.* Hester Chapman

## ALAN PRYCE-JONES

Three books of 1947:

*The Storer of the Field.* R. S. Thomas

*The Poetic Image.* C. Day Lewis

*Portrait of Edith Wharton.* Percy Lubbock

**HERBERT READ**

*Farewell to European History.* Alfred Weber

*Between Man and Man.* Martin Buber

*The Death of Virgil.* Hermann Broch

A book published in England in 1947, but which I read earlier, would have been a candidate: Sartre's *Age of Reason*

**JOHN RUSSELL**

*The Journals of André Gide, Vol. I*

*The Classical Moment.* Martin Turnell

*Tea With Mrs. Goodman.* Philip Toynbee

These unoriginal choices are the books which I most prize among those which duty, habit, or the secret complicity of the coeval has led me to read. I have discounted all reprints or new editions of favourite books first printed before 1947.

**PHILIP TOYNBEE**

*Rimbaud.* Enid Starkie

*Flaubert and Madame Bovary.* Francis Steegmuller

*Eustace and Hilda.* L. P. Hartley

**ARTHUR WALEY**

*Demetrios Capetanakis.* Edited by John Lehmann

*The Shadow of Cain.* Edith Sitwell

*The Gertrude Stein First Reader and Three Plays<sup>1</sup>*

**EVELYN WAUGH**

*A Retreat for Priests.* Ronald Knox

*Irregular Adventure.* Christie Lawrence

*Joy in the Morning.* P. G. Wodehouse

**EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST**

*A Study of Goethe.* Barker Fairley

*Eustace and Hilda.* L. P. Hartley

*Tea with Mrs. Goodman.* Philip Toynbee

<sup>1</sup>Bears date 1946, but I don't think actually on sale till 1947.

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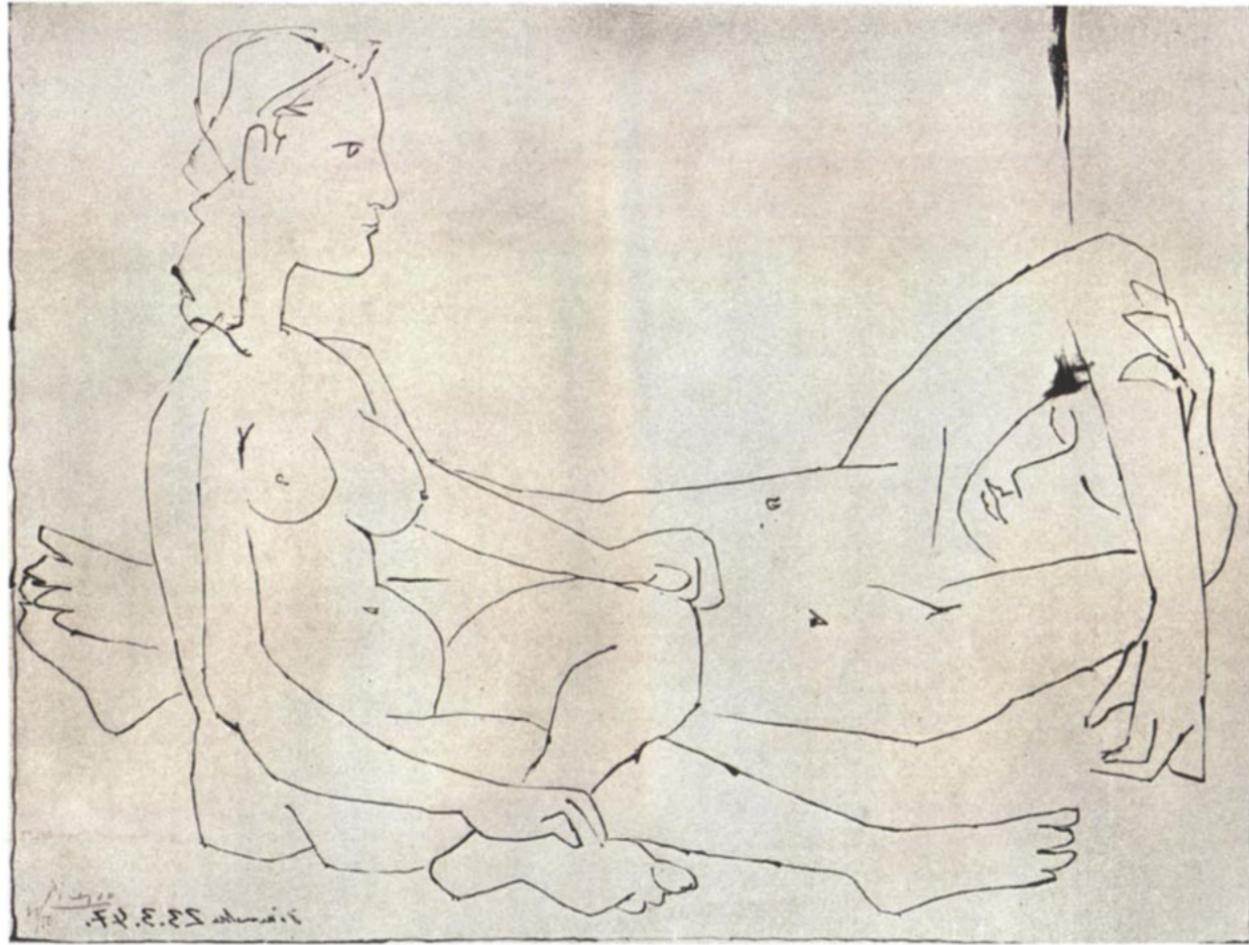
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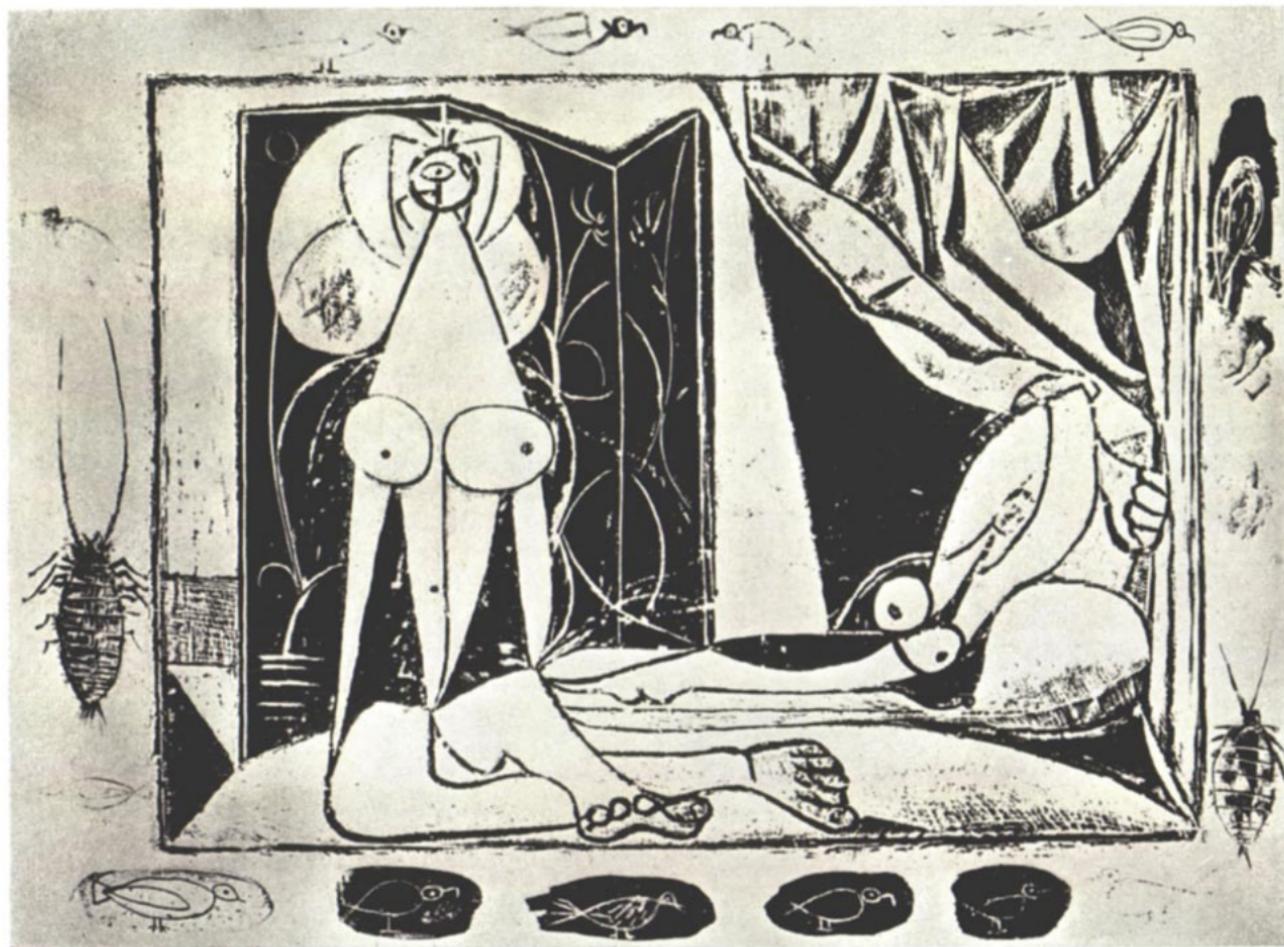
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*Some reviews of Richard Strachey's*  
**LITTLE REUBEN'S ISLAND**

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I liked LITTLE REUBEN'S ISLAND for another reason. Richard Strachey's children talk like yours and mine. They squabble, make it up, forget their differences in shared adventure. Here is youth as youngsters know it. Simonette Strachey's illustrations abound in humorous touches.

*The Daily Telegraph.*

Even more I admired LITTLE REUBEN'S ISLAND by Richard and Simonette Strachey. Mr. Strachey has a gay and untroubled insight into the workings of a child's story-telling imagination. He is quite exceptional. He never talks down; indeed, he gives the impression that it is the children themselves who are talking their own story, making it up fast as they go along. Their talk is associative and purposeful as children's always is; and careful to preserve the sense of security when their invention becomes fantastic.

*New Statesman and Nation.*

The fact that this book is written by Richard Strachey is a guarantee of its quality . . . The book is enriched by a number of songs with music by Robert Irving and pictures, some in colour, by Simonette Strachey.

*Journal of Education.*

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*Richard Strachey's new book for children is now on sale at booksellers. Its title is LITTLE REUBEN AT THE NORTH POLE and has illustrations in colour and black-and-white by Simonette Strachey. 7s. 6d. net*

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